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WASHINGTON IRVING.

PROSE MASTERPIECES

FROM

MODERN ESSAYISTS

IRVING, LEIGH HUNT, LAMB, DE QUINCEY, LANDOR, SYDNEY SMITH, THACKERAY, EMERSON, MATTHEW ARNOLD, JOHN MORLEY.

NEW YORK

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE purpose of this selection of the Modern Essayists is indicated by the title. It has been the intention of the editor to bring together such productions of the great modern writers of English prose as should not only present good specimens of English style, but should also be fairly characteristic of the methods of thought and manner of expression of the several writers.

It has also been part of the plan to group the papers, as far as practicable, according to the connection of their subjects or the closeness of their authors' intellectual kinship. Thus the reader has an opportunity of comparing the thoughts of Irving and Leigh Hunt on literature, and of Lamb and De Quincey on social intercourse. He can consider together the different theories of history and historic methods of three such authorities as Carlyle, Macaulay, and Froude; he can note the suggestions

of Emerson and Thackeray upon compensations in life, and can give due weight to the opinions concerning culture, of Arnold, Morley, and Helps. He will find associated together counsels as to good work from two such capable and idiosyncratic workers as Kingsley and Ruskin, while he can study the different points of view, concerning race sympathies, of Freeman and Gladstone.

The series closes with an eloquent argument by Newman, (whose vigorous prose is too little known to American readers) on the source of true authority, and a characteristically incisive and forcible paper by Stephen, in behalf of the right and duty of the individual to think and to speak for himself.

The collection has the advantage over the well-edited and popular series of Charles Knight —"Half Hours with the Best Authors"—in that, instead of being made up of fragments, (which are of necessity tantalizing in proportion to their interest) it consists solely of complete essays, in which the thoughts and arguments of the writers on the several subjects considered find their full expression.

The editor is ready to believe that a better selection might have been made; and in pre-

paring from the literature of a century such a brief list of the authors and essays as the compass of this series permitted, there must, in any case, be room for wide differences of judgment and taste.

It is safe, however, to assure the readers of these volumes, that the papers they contain all belong to the best literature, and there will not be many, probably, who would contest the claim that they are to be ranked as prose masterpieces. The editor takes this opportunity of acknowledging the courtesy of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co., in permitting to be included in the set the essays of Lowell and Emerson.

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WASHINGTON IRVING,

BORN 1783, DIED 1859.

THE MUTABILITY OF LITERATURE.

A COLLOQUY IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

By WASHINGTON IRVING.

I know that all beneath the moon decays,
And what by mortals in this world is brought,
In time's great period shall return to nought.
I know that all the muse's heavenly lays,
With toil of sprite which are so dearly bought,
As idle sounds, of few or none are sought;
That there is nothing lighter than mere praise.
DRUMMOND OF HAWTHORNDEN.

THERE are certain half-dreaming moods of mind, in which we naturally steal away from noise and glare, and seek some quiet haunt, where we may indulge our reveries and build our air-castles undisturbed. In such a mood I was loitering about the old gray cloisters of Westminster Abbey, enjoying that luxury of wandering thought which one is apt to dignify with the name of reflection; when suddenly an interruption of madcap boys from Westminster School, playing at football, broke in upon the monastic stillness of the place,

making the vaulted passages and mouldering tombs echo with their merriment. I sought to take refuge from their noise by penetrating still deeper into the solitudes of the pile, and applied to one of the vergers for admission to the library. He conducted me through a portal rich with the crumbling sculpture of former ages, which opened upon a gloomy passage leading to the chapter-house and the chamber in which doomsday-book is deposited. Just within the passage is a small door on the left. To this the verger applied a key; it was double-locked, and opened with some difficulty, as if seldom used. We now ascended a dark, narrow staircase, and, passing through a second door, entered the library.

I found myself in a lofty antique hall, the roof supported by massive joists of old English oak. It was soberly lighted by a row of Gothic windows at a considerable height from the floor, and which apparently opened upon the roofs of the cloisters. An ancient picture of some reverend dignitary of the church in his robes hung over the fireplace. Around the hall and in a small gallery were the books, arranged in carved oaken cases. They consisted principally of old polemical writers, and were

much more worn by time than use. In the centre of the library was a solitary table with two or three books on it, an inkstand without ink, and a few pens parched by long disuse. The place seemed fitted for quiet study and profound meditation. It was buried deep among the massive walls of the abbey, and shut up from the tumult of the world. I could only hear now and then the shouts of the school-boys faintly swelling from the cloisters, and the sound of a bell tolling for prayers, echoing soberly along the roofs of the abbey. By degrees the shouts of merriment grew fainter and fainter, and at length died away; the bell ceased to toll, and a profound silence reigned through the dusky hall.

I had taken down a little thick quarto, curiously bound in parchment, with brass clasps, and seated myself at the table in a venerable elbow-chair. Instead of reading, however, I was beguiled by the solemn monastic air, and lifeless quiet of the place, into a train of musing. As I looked around upon the old volumes in their mouldering covers, thus ranged on the shelves, and apparently never disturbed in their repose, I could not but consider the library a kind of literary catacomb, where authors, like mum-

mies, are piously entombed, and left to blacken and moulder in dusty oblivion.

How much, thought I, has each of these volumes, now thrust aside with such indifference, cost some aching head! how many weary days! how many sleepless nights! How have their authors buried themselves in the solitude of cells and cloisters; shut themselves up from the face of man, and the still more blessed face of nature; and devoted themselves to painful research and intense reflection! And all for what? to occupy an inch of dusty shelf, —to have the title of their works read now and then in a future age, by some drowsy churchman or casual straggler like myself; and in another age to be lost, even to remembrance. Such is the amount of this boasted immortality. A mere temporary rumor, a local sound; like the tone of that bell which has just tolled among these towers, filling the ear for a moment—lingering transiently in echo—and then passing away like a thing that was not!

While I sat half murmuring, half meditating these unprofitable speculations, with my head resting on my hand, I was thrumming with the other hand upon the quarto, until I accidentally loosened the clasps; when, to my

utter astonishment, the little book gave two or three yawns, like one awaking from a deep sleep; then a husky hem; and at length began to talk. At first its voice was very hoarse and broken, being much troubled by a cobweb which some studious spider had woven across it; and having probably contracted a cold from long exposure to the chills and damps of the abbey. In a short time, however, it became more distinct, and I soon found it an exceedingly fluent, conversable little tome. Its language, to be sure, was rather quaint and obsolete, and its pronunciation, what, in the present day, would be deemed barbarous; but I shall endeavor, as far as I am able, to render it in modern parlance.

It began with railings about the neglect of the world—about merit being suffered to languish in obscurity, and other such commonplace topics of literary repining, and complained bitterly that it had not been opened for more than two centuries. That the dean only looked now and then into the library, sometimes took down a volume or two, trifled with them for a few moments, and then returned them to their shelves. "What a plague do they mean," said the little quarto, which I

began to perceive was somewhat choleric,— "what a plague do they mean by keeping several thousand volumes of us shut up here, and watched by a set of old vergers, like so many beauties in a harem, merely to be looked at now and then by the dean? Books were written to give pleasure and to be enjoyed; and I would have a rule passed that the dean should pay each of us a visit at least once a year; or, if he is not equal to the task, let them once in a while turn loose the whole School of Westminster among us, that at any rate we may now and then have an airing."

"Softly, my worthy friend," replied I; "you are not aware how much better you are off than most books of your generation. By being stored away in this ancient library, you are like the treasured remains of those saints and monarchs which lie enshrined in the adjoining chapels; while the remains of your contemporary mortals, left to the ordinary course of nature, have long since returned to dust."

"Sir," said the little tome, ruffling his leaves and looking big, "I was written for all the world, not for the bookworms of an abbey. I was intended to circulate from hand to hand,

like other great contemporary works; but here have I been clasped up for more than two centuries, and might have silently fallen a prey to these worms that are playing the very vengeance with my intestines, if you had not by chance given me an opportunity of uttering a few last words before I go to pieces."

"My good friend," rejoined I, "had you been left to the circulation of which you speak, you would long ere this have been no more. To judge from your physiognomy, you are now well stricken in years: very few of your contemporaries can be at present in existence; and those few owe their longevity to being immured like yourself in old libraries; which, suffer me to add, instead of likening to harems, you might more properly and gratefully have compared to those infirmaries attached to religious establishments, for the benefit of the old and decrepit, and where, by quiet fostering and no employment, they often endure to an amazingly good-for-nothing old age. You talk of your contemporaries as if in circulation,—where do we meet with their works? What do we hear of Robert Groteste, of Lincoln? No one could have toiled harder

than he for immortality. He is said to have written nearly two hundred volumes. He built, as it were, a pyramid of books to perpetuate his name; but, alas! the pyramid has long since fallen, and only a few fragments are scattered in various libraries, where they are scarcely disturbed even by the antiquarian. What do we hear of Giraldus Cambrensis, the historian, antiquary, philosopher, theologian, and poet? He declined two bishoprics, that he might shut himself up and write for posterity: but posterity never inquires after his labors. What of Henry of Huntingdon, who, besides a learned history of England, wrote a treatise on the contempt of the world, which the world has revenged by forgetting him? What is quoted of Joseph of Exeter, styled the miracle of his age in classical composition? Of his three great heroic poems one is lost forever, excepting a mere fragment; the others are known only to a few of the curious in literature; and as to his love-verses and epigrams, they have entirely disappeared. What is in current use of John Wallis, the Franciscan, who acquired the name of the tree of life? Of William of Malmsbury;—of Simeon of Durham;—of Benedict of Peterborough;—of John Hanvill of St. Albans;—of ——"

"Prithee, friend," cried the quarto, in a testy tone, "how old do you think me? You are talking of authors that lived long before my time, and wrote either in Latin or French, so that they in a manner expatriated themselves, and deserved to be forgotten[1]; but I, sir, was ushered into the world from the press of the renowned Wynkyn de Worde. I was written in my own native tongue, at a time when the language had become fixed; and indeed I was considered a model of pure and elegant English."

(I should observe that these remarks were couched in such intolerably antiquated terms, that I have had infinite difficulty in rendering them into modern phraseology.)

"I cry your mercy," said I, "for mistaking your age; but it matters little: almost all the writers of your time have likewise passed into forgetfulness; and De Worde's publications are mere literary rarities among book-collectors. The purity and stability of language, too, on which you found your claims to perpetuity,

[1] In Latin and French hath many soueraine wittes had great delyte to endite, and have many noble thinges fulfilde, but certes there ben some that speaken their poisye in French, of which speche the Frenchmen have as good a fantasye as we have in hearying of Frenchmen's Englishe.—*Chaucer's Testament of Love.*

have been the fallacious dependence of authors of every age, even back to the times of the worthy Robert of Gloucester, who wrote his history in rhymes of mongrel Saxon.[1] Even now many talk of Spenser's 'Well of pure English undefiled' as if the language ever sprang from a well or fountain-head, and was not rather a mere confluence of various tongues, perpetually subject to changes and intermixtures. It is this which has made English literature so extremely mutable, and the reputation built upon it so fleeting. Unless thought can be committed to something more permanent and unchangeable than such a medium, even thought must share the fate of every thing else, and fall into decay. This should serve as a check upon the vanity and exultation of the most popular writer. He finds the language in which he has embarked his fame gradually altering, and subject to the dilapidations of

[1] Holinshed, in his Chronicle, observes: "Afterwards, also, by deligent travell of Geffry Chaucer and of John Gowre, in the time of Richard the Second, and after them of John Scogan and John Lydgate, monke of Berrie, our said toong was brought to an excellent passe, notwithstanding that it never came unto the type of perfection until the time of Queen Elizabeth, wherein John Jewell, Bishop of Sarum, John Fox, and sundrie learned and excellent writers, have fully accomplished the ornature of the same, to their great praise and immortal commendation.

time and the caprice of fashion. He looks back and beholds the early authors of his country, once the favorites of their day, supplanted by modern writers. A few short ages have covered them with obscurity, and their merits can only be relished by the quaint taste of the bookworm. And such, he anticipates, will be the fate of his own work, which, however it may be admired in its day, and held up as a model of purity, will in the course of years grow antiquated and obsolete; until it shall become almost as unintelligible in its native land as an Egyptian obelisk, or one of those Runic inscriptions said to exist in the deserts of Tartary. I declare," added I, with some emotion, "when I contemplate a modern library, filled with new works, in all the bravery of rich gilding and binding, I feel disposed to sit down and weep; like the good Xerxes, when he surveyed his army, pranked out in all the splendor of military array, and reflected that in one hundred years not one of them would be in existence!"

"Ah," said the little quarto, with a heavy sigh, "I see how it is; these modern scribblers have superseded all the good old authors. I suppose nothing is read nowadays but Sir Philip

Sydney's 'Arcadia,' Sackville's stately plays, and 'Mirror for Magistrates,' or the fine-spun euphuisms of the 'unparalleled John Lyly.'"

"There you are again mistaken," said I; "the writers whom you suppose in vogue, because they happened to be so when you were last in circulation, have long since had their day. Sir Philip Sydney's 'Arcadia,' the immortality of which was so fondly predicted by his admirers,[1] and which, in truth, is full of noble thoughts, delicate images, and graceful turns of language, is now scarcely ever mentioned. Sackville has strutted into obscurity; and even Lyly, though his writings were once the delight of a court, and apparently perpetuated by a proverb, is now scarcely known even by name. A whole crowd of authors who wrote and wrangled at the time, have likewise gone down, with all their writings and their controversies. Wave after wave of succeeding literature has rolled over them, until they are buried so deep, that it is only now and then

[1] Live ever sweete booke; the simple image of his gentle witt, and the golden-pillar of his noble courage; and ever notify unto the world that thy writer was the secretary of eloquence, the breath of the muses, the honey-bee of the daintyest flowers of witt and arte, the pith of morale and intellectual virtues, the arme of Bellona in the field, the tonge of Suada in the chamber, the sprite of Practise in esse, and the paragon of excellency in print.—*Harvey Pierce's Supererogation.*

that some industrious diver after fragments of antiquity brings up a specimen for the gratification of the curious.

"For my part," I continued, "I consider this mutability of language a wise precaution of Providence for the benefit of the world at large, and of authors in particular. To reason from analogy, we daily behold the varied and beautiful tribes of vegetables springing up, flourishing, adorning the fields for a short time, and then fading into dust, to make way for their successors. Were not this the case, the fecundity of nature would be a grievance instead of a blessing. The earth would groan with rank and excessive vegetation, and its surface become a tangled wilderness. In like manner the works of genius and learning decline, and make way for subsequent productions. Language gradually varies, and with it fade away the writings of authors who have flourished their allotted time; otherwise, the creative powers of genius would overstock the world, and the mind would be completely bewildered in the endless mazes of literature. Formerly there were some restraints on this excessive multiplication. Works had to be transcribed by hand, which was a slow and

laborious operation ; they were written either on parchment, which was expensive, so that one work was often erased to make way for another; or on papyrus, which was fragile and extremely perishable. Authorship was a limited and unprofitable craft, pursued chiefly by monks in the leisure and solitude of their cloisters. The accumulation of manuscripts was slow and costly, and confined almost entirely to monasteries. To these circumstances it may, in some measure, be owing that we have not been inundated by the intellect of antiquity; that the fountains of thought have not been broken up, and modern genius drowned in the deluge. But the inventions of paper and the press have put an end to all these restraints. They have made every one a writer, and enabled every mind to pour itself into print, and diffuse itself over the whole intellectual world. The consequences are alarming. The stream of literature has swollen into a torrent—augmented into a river—expanded into a sea. A few centuries since, five or six hundred manuscripts constituted a great library; but what would you say to libraries such as actually exist containing three or four hundred thousand volumes ; legions of

authors at the same time busy; and the press going on with activity, to double and quadruple the number. Unless some unforeseen mortality should break out among the progeny of the Muse, now that she has become so prolific, I tremble for posterity. I fear the mere fluctuation of language will not be sufficient. Criticism may do much. It increases with the increase of literature, and resembles one of those salutary checks on population spoken of by economists. All possible encouragement, therefore, should be given to the growth of critics, good or bad. But I fear all will be in vain; let criticism do what it may, writers will write, printers will print, and the world will inevitably be overstocked with good books. It will soon be the employment of a lifetime merely to learn their names. Many a man of passable information, at the present day, reads scarcely any thing but reviews; and before long a man of erudition will be little better than a mere walking catalogue."

"My very good sir," said the little quarto, yawning most drearily in my face, "excuse my interrupting you, but I perceive you are rather given to prose. I would ask the fate of an author who was making some noise just as I

left the world. His reputation, however, was considered quite temporary. The learned shook their heads at him, for he was a poor half-educated varlet, that knew little of Latin, and nothing of Greek, and had been obliged to run the country for deer-stealing. I think his name was Shakespeare. I presume he soon sunk into oblivion."

"On the contrary," said I, "it is owing to that very man that the literature of his period has experienced a duration beyond the ordinary term of English literature. There rise authors now and then, who seem proof against the mutability of language, because they have rooted themselves in the unchanging principles of human nature. They are like gigantic trees that we sometimes see on the banks of a stream; which, by their vast and deep roots, penetrating through the mere surface, and laying hold on the very foundations of the earth, preserve the soil around them from being swept away by the ever-flowing current, and hold up many a neighboring plant, and, perhaps, worthless weed, to perpetuity. Such is the case with Shakespeare, whom we behold defying the encroachments of time, retaining in modern use the language and literature of his day, and

giving duration to many an indifferent author, merely from having flourished in his vicinity. But even he, I grieve to say, is gradually assuming the tint of age, and his whole form is overrun by a profusion of commentators, who, like clambering vines and creepers, almost bury the noble plant that upholds them."

Here the little quarto began to heave his sides and chuckle, until at length he broke out in a plethoric fit of laughter that had wellnigh choked him, by reason of his excessive corpulency. "Mighty well!" cried he, as soon as he could recover breath; "mighty well! and so you would persuade me that the literature of an age is to be perpetuated by a vagabond deer-stealer! by a man without learning; by a poet, forsooth—a poet!" And here he wheezed forth another fit of laughter.

I confess that I felt somewhat nettled at this rudeness, which, however, I pardoned on account of his having flourished in a less polished age. I determined, nevertheless, not to give up my point.

"Yes," resumed I, positively, "a poet; for of all writers he has the best chance for immortality. Others may write from the head, but he writes from the heart, and the heart will

always understand him. He is the faithful portrayer of nature, whose features are always the same, and always interesting. Prose-writers are voluminous and unwieldy; their pages are crowded with commonplaces, and their thoughts expanded into tediousness. But with the true poet every thing is terse, touching, or brilliant. He gives the choicest thoughts in the choicest language. He illustrates them by every thing that he sees most striking in nature and art. He enriches them by pictures of human life, such as it is passing before him. His writings, therefore, contain the spirit, the aroma, if I may use the phrase, of the age in which he lives. They are caskets which enclose within a small compass the wealth of the language,—its family jewels, which are thus transmitted in a portable form to posterity. The setting may occasionally be antiquated, and require now and then to be renewed, as in the case of Chaucer; but the brilliancy and intrinsic value of the gems continue unaltered. Cast a look back over the long reach of literary history. What vast valleys of dulness, filled with monkish legends and academical controversies! what bogs of theological speculations! what dreary wastes of meta-

physics! Here and there only do we behold the heaven-illuminated bards, elevated like beacons on their widely separate heights, to transmit the pure light of poetical intelligence from age to age." [1]

I was just about to launch forth into eulogiums upon the poets of the day, when the sudden opening of the door caused me to turn my head. It was the verger, who came to inform me that it was time to close the library. I sought to have a parting word with the quarto, but the worthy little tome was silent; the clasps were closed; and it looked perfectly unconscious of all that had passed. I have been to the library two or three times since, and have endeavored to draw it into further conversation, but in vain; and whether all

[1] Thorow earth and waters deepe,
The pen by skill doth passe;
And featly nyps the worldes abuse,
And shoes us in a glasse
The vertu and the vice
Of every wight alyve:
The honey comb that bee doth make
Is not so sweet in hyve,
As are the golden leves
That drop from poet's head!
Which doth surmount our common talke
As farre as dross doth lead.

Churchyard.

this rambling colloquy actually took place, or whether it was another of those odd day-dreams to which I am subject, I have never to this moment been able to discover.

LEIGH HUNT.

BORN 1784 DIED 1859.

THE WORLD OF BOOKS.

By LEIGH HUNT.

Difficulty of Proving that a Man is not Actually in a Distant Place, by Dint of being there in Imagination—Visit of that Kind to Scotland—Suggestion of a Book-Geography; of Maps, in which None but Poetical or Otherwise Intellectually-Associated Places are Set Down—Scottish, English, French, and Italian Items for Such Maps—Local Literizations of Rousseau and Wordsworth Objected to—Actual Enrichment of the Commonest Places by Intellectual Associations.

To the Editor of Tait's Magazine.

SIR :—

To write in your magazine makes me feel as if I, at length, had the pleasure of being personally in Scotland, a gratification which I have not yet enjoyed in any other way. I dive into my channel of communication, like another Alpheus, and reappear in the shop of Mr. Tait; not pursuing, I trust, any thing *fugitive*, but behaving very unlike a river-god, and helping to bring forth an Edinburgh periodical.

Nor will you, sir, who enter so much into the interests of your fellow-creatures, and know so well of what their faculties are capable, look

upon this kind of presence as a thing so purely unreal as might be supposed. Our strongest proofs of the existence of any thing amounts but to a proportionate belief to that effect; and it would puzzle a wise man, though not a fool, to prove to himself that I was not, in some spiritual measure, in any place where I chose to pitch my imagination. I notice this metaphysical subtlety merely, in the first place, to balk your friend the Pechler, should he think it a settled thing that a man cannot be in two places at once (which would be a very green assumption of his); and, secondly, the better to impress a conviction which I have,—that I know Scotland very well, and have been there many times.

Whether we go to another country on these occasions, in the manner of a thing spiritual, our souls being pitched out of ourselves like rockets or meteors; or whether the country comes to us, and our large souls are inhabited by it for the time being, upon the principle of the greater including the less,—the mind of man being a far more capacious thing than any set of square miles,—I shall leave the curious to determine; but if I am not intimate with the very best parts of Scotland, and have not seen

them a thousand times, then do I know nothing of Burns, or Allan Ramsay, or Walter Scott, or Smollett, or Ossian, or James the First or Fifth, or snoods, or cockernonies, or gloamin', or birks and burnies, or plaids, bonnets, or philibegs, or John Knox, or Queen Mary, or the Canongate, or the Calton Hill, or Hume and Robertson, or Tweedside, or a haggis, or cakes, or heather, or reels and strathspeys, or Glengarry, or all the clans, or Auld Robin Gray, or a mist, or rappee, or second sight, or the kirk, or the cutty-stool, or golf and hurling, or the border, or Bruce and Wallace, or bagpipes, or bonnie lasses.

"A lover's plaid and a bed of heath," says the right poetical Allan Cunningham, "are favorite topics with the Northern muse. When the heather is in bloom, it is worthy of becoming the couch of beauty. *A sea of brown blossom, undulating as far as the eye can reach, and swarming with wild bees, is a fine sight.*" Sir, I have seen it a million times, though I never set eyes on it.

Who that has ever read it, is not put into visual possession of the following scene in the "Gentle Shepherd"?

"A flowrie howm between twa verdant braes,
Where lasses used to wash and spread their claes;
A trotting burnie, wimpling through the ground,
Its channel pebbles shining smooth and round;
Here view twa barefoot beauties, clean and clear."

Or this?—

"The open field.—A cottage in a glen;
An auld wife spinning at the sunny en'."

Or this other, a perfect domestic picture?—

"While Peggy laces up her bosom fair,
Wi' a blue snood Jenny binds up her hair;
Glaud by a morning ingle takes a beek,
The rising sun shines motty through the reek;
A pipe his mouth, the lasses please his een,
And now and then a joke maun intervene."

The globe we inhabit is divisible into two worlds: one hardly less tangible, and far more known than the other,—the common geographical world, and the world of books; and the latter may be as geographically set forth. A man of letters, conversant with poetry and romance, might draw out a very curious map, in which this world of books should be delineated and filled up, to the delight of all genuine readers, as truly as that in Guthrie or Pinkerton. To give a specimen, and begin with Scotland,—Scotland would not be the mere territory it is, with a scale of so many miles to a degree, and such and such a population. Who (except a

patriot or a cosmopolite) cares for the miles or the men, or knows that they exist, in any degree of consciousness with which he cares for the never-dying population of books? How many generations of men have passed away, and will pass, in Ayrshire or Dumfries, and not all the myriads be as interesting to us as a single Burns? What have we known of them, or shall ever know, whether lairds, lords, or ladies, in comparison with the inspired ploughman? But we know of the bards and the lasses, and the places which he has recorded in song; we know the scene of "Tam o' Shanter's" exploit; we know the pastoral landscapes above quoted, and the scenes immortalized in Walter Scott and the old ballads; and, therefore, the book-map of Scotland would present us with the most prominent of these. We should have the border, with its banditti, towns, and woods; Tweedside, Melrose, and Roslin, "Edina," otherwise called Edinburgh and Auld Reekie, or the town of Hume, Robertson, and others; Woodhouselee, and other classical and haunted places; the bower built by the fair hands of "Bessie Bell" and "Mary Gray"; the farm-houses of Burns' friends; the scenes of his loves and sorrows; the land of "Old Mortality," of the

"Gentle Shepherd," and of "Ossian." The Highlands, and the great blue billowy domains of heather, would be distinctly marked out, in their most poetical regions; and we should have the tracks of Ben Jonson to Hawthornden, of "Rob Roy" to his hiding-places, and of "Jeanie Deans" toward England. Abbotsford, be sure, would not be left out; nor the house of the "Antiquary," almost as real a man as his author. Nor is this all: for we should have older Scotland, the Scotland of James the First, and of "Peebles at the Play," and Gawin Douglas, and Bruce, and Wallace; we should have older Scotland, still, the Scotland of Ariosto, with his tale of "Ginevra," and the new "Andromeda," delivered from the sea-monster at the Isle of Ebuda (the Hebrides); and there would be the residence of the famous "Launcelot of the Lake," at Berwick, called the Joyeuse Garde, and other ancient sites of chivalry and romance; nor should the nightingale be left out in "Ginevra's" bower, for Ariosto has put it there, and there, accordingly, it is and has been heard, let ornithology say what it will; for what ornithologist knows so much of the nightingale as a poet? We would have an inscription put on the spot—"Here the

nightingale sings, contrary to what has been affirmed by White and others."

This is the Scotland of books, and a beautiful place it is. I will venture to affirm, sir, even to yourself, that it is a more beautiful place than the other Scotland, always excepting to an exile or a lover; for the former is piqued to prefer what he must not touch; and, to the latter, no spot is so charming as the ugliest place that contains his beauty. Not that Scotland has not many places literally as well as poetically beautiful: I know that well enough. But you see that young man there, turning down the corner of the dullest spot in Edinburgh, with a dead wall over against it, and delight in his eyes? He sees No. 4, the house where the girl lives he is in love with. Now what that place is to him, all places are, in their proportion, to the lover of books, for he has beheld them by the light of imagination and sympathy.

China, sir, is a very unknown place to us,—in one sense of the word unknown; but who is not intimate with it as the land of tea, and *china*, and ko-tous, and pagodas, and mandarins, and Confucius, and conical caps, and people with little names, little eyes, and little

feet, who sit in little bowers, drinking little cups of tea, and writing little odes? The Jesuits, and the teacups, and the novel of "Ju-Kiao-Li," have made us well acquainted with it; better, a great deal, than millions of its inhabitants are acquainted—fellows who think it in the middle of the world, and know nothing of themselves. With *one* China they are totally unacquainted, to wit, the great China of the poet and old travellers, Cathay, "seat of Cathian Can," the country of which Ariosto's "Angelica" was princess-royal; yes, she was a Chinese, "the fairest of her sex, Angelica." It shows that the ladies in that country must have greatly degenerated; for it is impossible to conceive that Ariosto, and Orlando, and Rinaldo, and King Sacripant, who was a Circassian, could have been in love with her for having eyes and feet like a pig. I will deviate here into a critical remark, which is, that the Italian poets seem to have considered people the handsomer the farther you went north. The old traveller, it is true, found a good deal of the beauty that depends on red and white, in Tartary and other western regions; and a fine complexion is highly esteemed in the swarthy south. But "Astolfo," the Englishman, is cele-

brated for his beauty by the Italian poets; the unrivalled "Angelica" was a Chinese; and the handsomest of Ariosto's heroes, "Zerbino," of whom he writes the famous passage, "that nature made him, and then broke the mould," was a *Scotchman.* The poet had probably seen some very handsome Scotchman in Romagna. With this piece of "bribery and corruption" to your national readers, I return to my subject.

Book-England, on the map, would shine as the Albion of the old Giants; as the "Logres" of the Knights of the Round Table; as the scene of Amadis of Gaul, with its *island* of Windsor; as the abode of fairies, of the Druids, of the divine Countess of Coventry, of Guy, Earl of Warwick, of "Alfred" (whose reality was a romance), of the fair Rosamond, of the "Arcades" and "Comus" of Chaucer and Spenser, of the poets of the Globe and the Mermaid, the wits of Twickenham and Hampton Court. Fleet Street would be Johnson's Fleet Street; the Tower would belong to Julius Cæsar; and Blackfriars to Suckling, Vandyke, and the "Dunciad." Chronology and the mixture of truth and fiction, that is to say, of one sort of truth and another, would come to nothing in a work of this kind; for, as it has been before

observed, things are real in proportion as they are impressive. And who has not as "gross, open, and palpable" an idea of "Falstaff" in Eastcheap, as of "Captain Grose" himself, beating up his quarters? A map of fictitious, literary, and historical London, would, of itself, constitute a great curiosity. So would one of Edinburgh, or of any other city in which there have been great men and romantic events, whether the latter were real or fictitious. Swift speaks of maps, in which they

"Place elephants for want of towns."

Here would be towns and elephants too, the popular and the prodigious. How much would not Swift do for Ireland, in this geography of wit and talent! What a figure would not St. Patrick's Cathedral make! The other day, mention was made of a "Dean of St. Patrick's" *now living;* as if there was, or ever could be, more than one Dean of St. Patrick's! In the Irish maps we should have the Saint himself driving out all venomous creatures; (what a pity that the most venomous retain a property as absentees!) and there would be the old Irish kings, and O'Donoghue with his White Horse, and the lady of the "gold wand," who made

the miraculous virgin pilgrimage, and all the other marvels of lakes and ladies, and the Round Towers still remaining to perplex the antiquary, and Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," and Goldsmith himself, and the birthplaces of Steele and Sterne, and the brief hour of poor Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Carolan with his harp, and the schools of the poor Latin boys under the hedges, and Castle Rackrent, and Edgeworth's town, and the Giant's Causeway, and Ginleas and other classical poverties, and Spenser's castle on the river Mulla, with the wood-gods whom his pipe drew around him. Ireland is wild ground still; and there are some that would fain keep it so, like a forest to hunt in.

The French map would present us with the woods and warriors of old Gaul, and Lucan's witch; with Charlemagne and his court at Tours; with the siege of Paris by the Saracens, and half the wonders of Italian poetry; with Angelica and Medoro; with the castles of Orlando and Rinaldo, and the traitor Gan; with part of the great forest of Ardenne (Rosalind being in it); with the gentle territory of the Troubadours, and Navarre; with "Love's Labor Lost," and "Vaucluse"; with Petrarch

and Laura, and the pastoral scenes of D'Urfé's romance, and the "Men-Wolves" of Brittany, and the "Fairy of Lusignan." Napoleon, also (for he too was a romance), should be drawn as a giant, meeting the allied forces in the neighborhood of Paris.

Italy would be covered with ancient and modern romance; with Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Dante, Boccaccio, etc., with classical villas, and scenes elysian and infernal. There would be the region of Saturn during his Age of Gold, and the old Tuscan cities, and Phaeton in the north, and the sirens and fairies at Naples, and Polyphemus in Sicily, with the abodes of Boiardo and Ariosto, and Horace's Mount Soracte, and the Cross of St. Peter, and the city in the sea, and the golden scenes of Titian and Raphael, and other names that make us hear the music of their owners: Pythagoras also with his philosophy, and Petrarch with his lute. A circle of stars would tell us where Galileo lived; and the palace of Doria would look more than royal toward the sea.

I dare not, in this hasty sketch, and with limited time before me, indulge myself in other luxuries of recollection, or do any thing more than barely mention the names of Spain, Fon-

tarabia, and Cervantes; of Greece; of Persia, and the "Arabian Nights"; of Mount Caucasus, and Turkey, and the Gothic North; of El Dorado and Columbus; or the sea-snakes, floating islands, and other marvels of the ocean; not forgetting the Atalantis of Plato, and the regions of Gulliver and Peter Wilkins. Neither can I have the pleasure of being suffocated with contemplating, at proper length, the burning deserts of Africa; or of hearing the ghastly sounds of its old Satyrs and Ægipans in their woody hills at night-time, described by Pomponius Mela; or of seeing the Stormy Spirit of the Cape, stationed there for ever by Camoens, and whose stature on the map would be like a mountain. You will be good enough to take this paper as nothing but a hint of what such a map might contain.

One word, however, respecting a heresy in fictitious belief, which has been uttered by Rousseau, and repeated, I am sorry to say, by our excellent poet Wordsworth, the man of all men who ought not to reduce a matter of fact to what might be supposed to be its poverty. Rousseau, speaking of the banks of the Lignon, where the scene of the old French romance is laid, expresses his disappointment at finding

there nothing like the beautiful things he fancied in his childhood; and Mr. Wordsworth in his poem of "Yarrow, Visited and Revisited," utters a like regret, in speaking of the scene of the "bonny bride—the winsome marrow." I know there is such an opinion abroad, like many other errors; but it does not become men of imagination to give into it; and I must protest against it, as a flat irreligion. I do not pretend to be as romantic in my conduct as the Genevese philosopher, or as poetical in my nature as the bard of Rydal Mount; but I have, by nature, perhaps, greater animal spirits than either; and a bit of health is a fine prism to see fancies by. It may be granted, for the sake of argument, that the book-Lignon and the book-Yarrow are still finer things than the Lignon and Yarrow geographical; but to be actually on the spot, to look with one's own eyes upon the places in which our favorite heroes or heroines underwent the circumstances that made us love them—this may surely make up for an advantage on the side of the description in the book; and, in addition to this, we have the pleasure of seeing how much has been done for the place by love and poetry. I have seen various places in Europe, which have been

rendered interesting by great men and their works; and I never found myself the worse for seeing them, but the better. I seem to have made friends with them in their own houses: to have walked, and talked, and suffered, and enjoyed with them; and if their books have made the places better, *the books themselves were there which made them so*, and which *grew out of them*. The poet's hand was on the place, blessing it. I can no more separate this idea from the spot, than I can take away from it any other beauty. Even in London, I find the principle hold good in me, though I have lived there many years, and, of course, associated it with every commonplace the most unpoetical. The greater still includes the less: and I can no more pass through Westminster, without thinking of Milton; or the Borough, without thinking of Chaucer and Shakespeare; or Gray's Inn, without calling Bacon to mind; or Bloomsbury Square, without Steele and Akenside—than I can prefer brick and mortar to wit and poetry, or not see a beauty upon it beyond architecture, in the splendor of the recollection. I once had duties to perform, which kept me out late at night, and severely taxed my health and spirits. My path lay

through a neighborhood in which Dryden lived: and though nothing could be more commonplace, and I used to be tired to the heart and soul of me, I never hesitated to go a little out of the way, purely that I might pass through Gerard Street, and so give myself the shadow of a pleasant thought.

I am, Sir, your cordial well-wisher,

A LOVER OF BOOKS.

CHARLES LAMB.

BORN 1775—DIED 1834.

IMPERFECT SYMPATHIES.

By CHARLES LAMB.

"I am of a constitution so general, that it consorts and sympathizeth with all things; I have no antipathy, or rather idiosyncrasy in any thing. Those natural repugnancies do not touch me, nor do I behold with prejudice the French, Italian, Spaniard, or Dutch."—*Religio Medici.*

THAT the author of the "Religio Medici," mounted upon the airy stilts of abstraction, conversant about notional and conjectural essences—in whose categories of Being the possible took the upper hand of the actual—should have overlooked the impertinent individualities of such poor concretions as mankind, is not much to be admired. It is rather to be wondered at, that in the genus of animals he should have condescended to distinguish that species at all. For myself—earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities,—

Standing on earth, nor rapt above the sky,

I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy

excess. I can look with no indifferent eye upon things or persons. Whatever is, is to me a matter of taste or distaste; or when once it becomes indifferent, it begins to be disrelishing. I am, in plainer words, a bundle of prejudices—made up of likings and dislikings—the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In a certain sense, I hope it may be said of me that I am a lover of my species. I can feel for all indifferently, but I cannot feel toward all equally. The more purely-English word that expresses sympathy, will better explain my meaning. I can be a friend to a worthy man, who upon another account cannot be my mate or *fellow*. I cannot *like* all people alike.[1]

[1] I would be understood as confining myself to the subject of *imperfect sympathies*. To nations or classes of men there can be no direct antipathy. There may be individuals born and constellated so opposite to another individual nature, that the same sphere cannot hold them. I have met with my moral antipodes, and can believe the story of two persons meeting (who never saw one another before in their lives) and instantly fighting.

> We by proof find there should be
> 'Twixt man and man such an antipathy,
> That though he can show no just reason why
> For any former wrong or injury,
> Can neither find a blemish in his fame,
> Nor aught in face or feature justly blame,
> Can challenge or accuse him of no evil,
> Yet notwithstanding, hates him as a devil.

I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and, in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. There is something more plain and ingenuous in their mode of proceeding. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they

The lines are from old Heywood's "Hierarchie of Angels," and he subjoins a curious story in confirmation, of a Spaniard who attempted to assassinate a King Ferdinand of Spain, and being put to the rack could give no other reason for the deed but an inveterate antipathy which he had taken to the first sight of the king.

> The cause which to that act compell'd him
> Was, he ne'er loved him since he first beheld him.

pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure—and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting: waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath—but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. Their minds, as I said before, are suggestive merely. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests any thing, but unlades his stock of ideas

in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. He never stoops to catch a glittering something in your presence to share it with you, before he quite knows whether it be true touch or not. You cannot cry *halves* to any thing that he finds. He does not find, but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian—you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain or vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel—he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no borderland with him. You cannot hover with him upon the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument. He always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him—for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates. He cannot compromise, or understand middle

actions. There can be but a right and a wrong. His conversation is as a book. His affirmations have the sanctity of an oath. You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book?" said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to "John Buncle,"—"did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blessed with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr. ——. After he had examined it minutely, I ventured to ask him how he liked MY BEAUTY (a foolish name it goes by among my friends)—when he very gravely assured me, that "he had considerable respect for my character and talents" (so he was pleased to say), "but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions." The misconception staggered me, but did not seem much to dis-

concert him. Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth—which nobody doubts. They do not so properly affirm, as annunciate it. They do indeed appear to have such a love for truth (as if, like virtue, it were valuable for itself) that all truth becomes equally valuable, whether the proposition that contains it be new or old, disputed, or such as is impossible to become a subject of disputation. I was present not long since at a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected; and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way), that I wished it were the father instead of the son—when four of them started up at once to inform me, that "that was impossible, because he was dead." An impracticable wish, it seems, was more than they could conceive. Swift has hit off this part of their character, namely, their love of truth, in his biting way, but with an illiberality that necessarily confines the passage to the margin.[1] The tediousness of these

[1] There are some people who think they sufficiently acquit themselves, and entertain their company, with relating facts of no consequence, not at all out of the road of such common incidents as happen every day; and this I have observed more frequently among the Scotch than any other nation, who are very careful not to omit the minutest circumstances of time or place; which kind of discourse, if it were not a little re-

people is certainly provoking. I wonder if they ever tire one another? In my early life I had a passionate fondness for the poetry of Burns. I have sometimes foolishly hoped to ingratiate myself with his countrymen by expressing it. But I have always found that a true Scot resents your admiration of his compatriot, even more than he would your contempt of him. The latter he imputes to your "imperfect acquaintance with many of the words which he uses"; and the same objection makes it a presumption in you to suppose that you can admire him. Thompson they seem to have forgotten. Smollett they have neither forgotten nor forgiven, for his delineation of Rory and his companion, upon their first introduction to our metropolis. Speak of Smollett as a great genius, and they will retort upon you Hume's History compared with *his* continuation of it. What if the historian had continued Humphrey Clinker?

I have, in the abstract, no disrespect for Jews. They are a piece of stubborn antiquity, compared with which Stonehenge is in its nonage. They date beyond the pyramids. But I should

lieved by the uncouth terms and phrases, as well as accent and gestures peculiar to that country, would be hardly tolerable.—*Hints Toward an Essay on Conversation.*

not care to be in habits of familiar intercourse with any of that nation. I confess that I have not the nerves to enter their synagogues. Old prejudices cling about me. I cannot shake off the story of Hugh of Lincoln. Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side,—of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must and ought to affect the blood of the children. I cannot believe it can run clear and kindly yet; or that a few fine words, such as candor, liberality, the light of a nineteenth century, can close up the breaches of so deadly a disunion. A Hebrew is nowhere congenial to me. He is least distasteful on 'Change—for the mercantile spirit levels all distinctions, as all are beauties in the dark. I boldly confess that I do not relish the approximation of Jew and Christian, which has become so fashionable. The reciprocal endearments have, to me, something hypocritical and unnatural in them. I do not like to see the Church and Synagogue kissing and congeeing in awkward postures of an affected civility. If *they* are converted, why do they not come over to us altogether? Why keep up a form of separation when the life of it is fled? If they can sit

with us at table, why do they kick at our cookery? I do not understand these half-convertites. Jews christianizing—Christians judaizing—puzzle me. I like fish or flesh. A moderate Jew is a more confounding piece of anomaly than a wet Quaker. The spirit of the synagogue is essentially *separative*. B—— would have been more in keeping if he had abided by the faith of his forefathers. There is a fine scorn in his face which nature meant to be of —— Christians. The Hebrew spirit is strong in him, in spite of his proselytism. He cannot conquer the shibboleth. How it breaks out when he sings, "The children of Israel passed through the Red Sea"! The auditors, for the moment, are as Egyptians to him, and he rides over our necks in triumph, There is no mistaking him. B—— has a strong expression of sense in his countenance, and it is confirmed by his singing. The foundation of his vocal excellence is sense. He sings with understanding, as Kemble delivered dialogue. He would sing the Commandments, and give an appropriate character to each prohibition. His nation in general have not over-sensible countenances. How should they?—but you seldom see a silly expression among them. Gain, and the pursuit

of gain, sharpen a man's visage. I never heard of an idiot being born among them. Some admire the Jewish female physiognomy. I admire it but with trembling. Jael had those full dark inscrutable eyes.

In the negro countenance you will often meet with strong traits of benignity. I have felt yearnings of tenderness toward some of these faces—or rather masks—that have looked out kindly upon one in casual encounters in the streets and highways. I love what Fuller beautifully calls—these "images of God cut in ebony." But I should not like to associate with them, to share my meals and my good nights with them—because they are black.

I love Quaker ways, and Quaker worship. I venerate the Quaker principles. It does me good for the rest of the day when I meet any of their people in my path. When I am ruffled or disturbed by any occurrence, the sight, or quiet voice of a Quaker, acts upon me as a ventilator, lightening the air, and taking off a load from the bosom. But I cannot like the Quakers (as Desdemona would say) "to live with them." I am all over sophisticated —with humors, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chit-

chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand whimwhams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet. My appetites are too high for the salads which (according to Evelyn) Eve dressed for the angel; my gusto too excited

To sit a guest with Daniel at his pulse.

The indirect answers which Quakers are often found to return to a question put to them may be explained, I think, without the vulgar assumption that they are more given to evasion and equivocating than other people. They naturally look to their words more carefully, and are more cautious of committing themselves. They have a peculiar character to keep up on this head. They stand in a manner upon their veracity. A Quaker is by law exempted from taking an oath. The custom of resorting to an oath in extreme cases, sanctified as it is by all religious antiquity, is apt (it must be confessed) to introduce into the laxer sort of minds the notion of two kinds of truth,—the one applicable to the solemn affairs of justice, and the other to the common proceedings of daily intercourse. As truth bound upon the conscience by an oath can be but

truth, so in the common affirmations of the shop and the market-place a latitude is expected and conceded upon questions wanting this solemn covenant. Something less than truth satisfies. It is common to hear a person say, "You do not expect me to speak as if I were upon my oath." Hence a great deal of incorrectness and inadvertency, short of falsehood, creeps into ordinary conversation; and a kind of secondary or laic-truth is tolerated, where clergy-truth—oath-truth—by the nature of the circumstances, is not required. A Quaker knows none of this distinction. His simple affirmation being received, upon the most sacred occasions, without any further test, stamps a value upon the words which he is to use upon the most indifferent topics of life. He looks to them naturally with more severity. You can have of him no more than his word. He knows, if he is caught tripping in a casual expression, he forfeits, for himself at least, his claim to the invidious exemption. He knows that his syllables are weighed—and how far a consciousness of this particular watchfulness, exerted against a person, has a tendency to produce indirect answers, and a diverting of the question by honest means, might be illustrated, and the

practice justified, by a more sacred example than is proper to be adduced upon this occasion. The admirable presence of mind, which is notorious in Quakers upon all contingencies, might be traced to this imposed self-watchfulness—if it did not seem rather an humble and secular scion of that old stock of religious constancy, which never bent or faltered, in the Primitive Friends, or gave way to the winds of persecution, to the violence of judge or accuser, under trials and racking examinations. "You will never be the wiser, if I sit here answering your questions till midnight," said one of those upright justicers to Penn, who had been putting law cases with a puzzling subtlety. "Thereafter as the answers may be," retorted the Quaker. The astonishing composure of this people is sometimes ludicrously displayed in lighter instances. I was travelling in a stage-coach with three male Quakers, buttoned up in the straitest nonconformity of their sect. We stopped to bait at Andover, where a meal, partly tea apparatus, partly supper, was set before us. My friends confined themselves to the tea-table. I in my way took supper. When the landlady brought in the bill, the eldest of my companions discovered that she had

charged for both meals. This was resisted. Mine hostess was very clamorous and positive. Some mild arguments were used on the part of the Quakers, for which the heated mind of the good lady seemed by no means a fit recipient. The guard came in with his usual peremptory notice. The Quakers pulled out their money and formally tendered it—so much for tea—I, in humble imitation, tendering mine—for the supper which I had taken. She would not relax in her demand. So they all three quietly put up their silver, as did myself, and marched out of the room, the eldest and gravest going first, with myself closing up the rear, who thought I could not do better than follow the example of such grave and warrantable personages. We got in. The steps went up. The coach drove off. The murmurs of mine hostess, not very indistinctly or ambiguously pronounced, became after a time inaudible—and now my conscience, which the whimsical scene had for a while suspended, beginning to give some twitches, I waited in the hope that some justification would be offered by these serious persons for the seeming injustice of their conduct. To my great surprise, not a syllable was dropped on the subject. They sat as mute

as at a meeting. At length the eldest of them broke silence, by inquiring of his next neighbor, "Hast thee heard how indigos go at the India House?" and the question operated as a soporific on my moral feeling as far as Exeter.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

BORN 1785—DIED 1859.

CONVERSATION.

By THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

AMONGST the arts connected with the *elegancies* of social life, in a degree which nobody denies, is the art of conversation; but in a degree which almost everybody denies, if one may judge by their neglect of its simplest rules, this same art is not less connected with the *uses* of social life. Neither the luxury of conversation, nor the possible benefit of conversation, is to be under that rude administration of it which generally prevails. Without an art, without some simple system of rules, gathered from experience of such contingencies as are most likely to mislead the practice, when left to its own guidance, no act of man nor effort accomplishes its purposes in perfection. The sagacious Greek would not so much as drink a glass of wine amongst a few friends without a systematic art to guide him, and a regular form of polity to control him, which art and which polity (begging Plato's pardon) were better than any of more

ambitious aim in his "Republic." Every *symposium* had its set of rules, and vigorous they were; had its own *symposiarch* to govern it, and a tyrant he was. Elected democratically, he became, when once installed, an autocrat not less despotic than the king of Persia. Purposes still more slight and fugitive have been organized into arts. Taking soup gracefully, under the difficulties opposed to it by a dinner dress at that time fashionable, was reared into an art about forty-five years ago by a Frenchman, who lectured upon it to ladies in London; and the most brilliant duchess of that day was amongst his best pupils. Spitting—if the reader will pardon the mention of so gross a fact—was shown to be a very difficult art, and publicly prelected upon about the same time, in the same great capital. The professors in this faculty were the hackney-coachmen; the pupils were gentlemen who paid a guinea each for three lessons; the chief problem in this system of hydraulics being to throw the salivating column in a parabolic curve from the centre of Parliament Street, when driving four-in-hand, to the foot pavements, right and left, so as to alarm the consciences of guilty peri-

patetics on either side. The ultimate problem, which closed the *curriculum* of study, was held to lie in spitting round a corner; when *that* was mastered, the pupil was entitled to his doctor's degree. Endless are the purposes of man, merely festal or merely comic, and aiming but at the momentary life of a cloud, which have earned for themselves the distinction and apparatus of a separate art. Yet for conversation, the great paramount purpose of social meetings, no art exists or has been attempted.

That seems strange, but is not really so. A limited process submits readily to the limits of a technical system; but a process so unlimited as the interchange of thought, seems to reject them. And even, if an art of conversation were less unlimited, the means of carrying such an art into practical effect, amongst so vast a variety of minds, seem wanting. Yet again, perhaps, after all, this may rest on a mistake. What we begin by misjudging is the particular phasis of conversation which brings it under the control of art and discipline. It is not in its relation to the intellect that conversation ever has been improved or *will* be improved primarily, but in its relation to

manners. Has a man ever mixed with what in technical phrase is called "good company," meaning company in the highest degree polished, company which (being or *not* being aristocratic as respects its composition) is aristocratic as respects the standard of its manners and usages? If he really *has*, and does not deceive himself from vanity or from pure inacquaintance with the world, in that case he must have remarked the large effect impressed upon the grace and upon the freedom of conversation by a few simple instincts of real good-breeding. Good-breeding—what is it? There is no need in this place to answer that question comprehensively; it is sufficient to say, that it is made up chiefly of *negative* elements; that it shows itself far less in what it prescribes, than it what it forbids. Now, even under this limitation of the idea, the truth is, that more will be done for the benefit of conversation by the simple magic of good-manners (that is, chiefly by a system of forbearances), applied to the besetting vices of social intercourse, than ever *was* or *can* be done by all varieties of intellectual power assembled upon the same arena. Intellectual graces of the highest order may perish and

confound each other when exercised in a spirit of ill-temper, or under the license of bad manners; whereas, very humble powers, when allowed to expand themselves colloquially in that genial freedom which is possible only under the most absolute confidence in the self-restraint of your collocutors, accomplish their purpose to a certainty, if it be the ordinary purpose of liberal amusement, and have a chance of accomplishing it even when this purpose is the more ambitious one of communicating knowledge or exchanging new views upon truth.

In my own early years, having been formed by nature too exclusively and morbidly for solitary thinking, I observed nothing. Seeming to have eyes, in reality I saw nothing. But it is a matter of no very uncommon experience, that, whilst the mere observers never become meditators, the mere meditators, on the other hand, may finally ripen into close observers. Strength of thinking, through long years, upon innumerable themes, will have the effect of disclosing a vast variety of questions, to which it soon becomes apparent that answers are lurking up and down the whole field of daily experience; and thus an external experience

which was slighted in youth, because it was a dark cipher that could be read into no meaning, a key that answered to no lock, gradually becomes interesting as it is found to yield one solution after another to problems that have independently matured in the mind. Thus, for instance, upon the special functions of conversation, upon its powers, its laws, its ordinary diseases, and their appropriate remedies, in youth I never bestowed a thought or a care. I viewed it, not as one amongst the gay ornamental arts of the intellect, but as one amongst the dull necessities of business. Loving solitude too much, I understood too little the capacities of colloquial intercourse. And thus it is, though not for *my* reason, that most people estimate the intellectual relations of conversation. Let these, however, be what they may, one thing seemed undeniable—that this world talked a great deal too much. It would be better for all parties, if nine in every ten of the *winged words* flying about in this world (Homer's *epea pteroenta*) had their feathers clipped amongst men, or even amongst women, who have a right to a larger allowance of words. Yet, as it was quite out of my power to persuade the world into any such self-

denying reformation, it seemed equally out of the line of my duties to nourish any moral anxiety in that direction. *To talk* seemed then in the same category as *to sleep;* not an accomplishment, but a base physical infirmity. As a moralist, I really was culpably careless upon the whole subject. I cared as little what absurdities men practised in their vast tennis-courts of conversation, where the ball is flying backward and forward to no purpose forever, as what tricks Englishmen might play with their monstrous national debt. Yet at length what I disregarded on any principle of moral usefulness, I came to make an object of the profoundest interest on principles of art. *Betting*, in like manner, and *wagering*, which apparently had no moral value, and for that reason had been always slighted as inconsiderable arts (though, by the way, they always had one valuable use, namely, that of evading quarrels, since a bet summarily intercepts an altercation), rose suddenly into a philosophic rank, when successively Huyghens, the Bernoullis, and De Moivre, were led, by the suggestion of these trivial practices amongst men, to throw the light of a high mathematical analysis upon the whole doctrine of chances.

Lord Bacon had been led to remark the capacities of conversation as an organ for sharpening one particular mode of intellectual power. Circumstances, on the other hand, led me into remarking the special capacities of conversation, as an organ for absolutely creating another mode of power. Let a man have read, thought, studied, as much as he may, rarely will he reach his possible advantages as a *ready* man, unless he has exercised his powers much in conversation—that was Lord Bacon's idea. Now, this wise and useful remark points in a direction not objective, but subjective—that is, it does not promise any absolute extension to truth itself, but only some greater facilities to the man who expounds or diffuses the truth. Nothing will be done for truth objectively that would not at any rate be done, but subjectively it will be done with more fluency, and at less cost of exertion to the doer. On the contrary, my own growing reveries on the latent powers of conversation (which, though a thing that then I hated, yet challenged at times unavoidably my attention) pointed to an absolute birth of new insight into the truth itself, as inseparable from the finer and more scientific exercise of the talking art.

It would not be the brilliancy, the ease, or the adroitness of the expounder that would benefit, but the absolute interests of the thing expounded. A feeling dawned on me of a secret magic lurking in the peculiar life, velocities, and contagious ardor of conversation, quite separate from any which belonged to books; arming a man with new forces, and not merely with a new dexterity in wielding the old ones. I felt, and in this I could not be mistaken, as too certainly it was a fact of my own experience, that in the electric kindling of life between two minds, and far less from the kindling natural to conflict (though *that* also is something) than from the kindling through sympathy with the object discussed, in its momentary coruscation of shifting phases, there sometimes arise glimpses and shy revelations of affinity, suggestion, relation, analogy, that could not have been approached through any avenues of methodical study. Great organists find the same effect of inspiration, the same result of power creative and revealing, in the mere movement and velocity of their own voluntaries, like the heavenly wheels of Milton, throwing off fiery flakes and bickering flames; these *impromptu* torrents of music create

rapturous *fioriture*, beyond all capacity in the artist to register, or afterward to imitate. The reader must be well aware that many philosophic instances exist where a change in the degree makes a change in the kind. Usually this is otherwise; the prevailing rule is, that the principle subsists unaffected by any possible variation in the amount or degree of the force. But a large class of exceptions must have met the reader, though from want of a pencil he has improperly omitted to write them down in his pocket-book—cases, namely, where upon passing beyond a certain point in the graduation, an alteration takes place suddenly in the *kind* of effect, a new direction is given to the power. Some illustration of this truth occurs in conversation, where a velocity in the movement of thought is made possible (and often natural), greater than ever can arise in methodical books; and where, secondly, approximations are more obvious and easily effected between things too remote for a steadier contemplation. One remarkable evidence of a *specific* power lying hid in conversation may be seen in such writings as have moved by impulses most nearly resembling those of conversation; for instance, in those of

Edmund Burke. For one moment, reader, pause upon the spectacle of two contrasted intellects, Burke's and Johnson's: one an intellect essentially going forward, governed by the very necessity of growth—by the law of motion in advance; the latter, essentially an intellect retrogressive, retrospective, and throwing itself back on its own steps. This original difference was aided accidentally in Burke by the tendencies of political partisanship, which, both from moving amongst moving things and uncertainties, as compared with the more stationary aspects of moral philosophy, and also from its more fluctuating and fiery passions, must unavoidably reflect in greater life the tumultuary character of conversation. The result from these original differences of intellectual constitution, aided by these secondary differences of pursuit, is, that Dr. Johnson never, in any instance, GROWS a truth before your eyes, whilst in the act of delivering it, or moving toward it. All that he offers up to the end of the chapter he had when he began. But to Burke, such was the prodigious elasticity of his thinking, equally in his conversation and in his writings, the mere act of movement became the principle or cause of

movement. Motion propagated motion, and life threw off life. The very violence of a projectile, as thrown by *him*, caused it to rebound in fresh forms, fresh angles, splintering, coruscating, which gave out thoughts as new (and that would at the beginning have been as startling) to himself as they are to his reader. In this power, which might be illustrated largely from the writings of Burke, is seen something allied to the powers of a prophetic seer, who is compelled oftentimes into seeing things as unexpected by himself as by others. Now, in conversation, considered as to its *tendencies* and capacities, there sleeps an intermitting spring of such sudden revelation, showing much of the same general character; a power putting on a character *essentially* differing from the character worn by the power of books.

If, then, in the *colloquial* commerce of thought, there lurked a power not shared by other modes of that great commerce, a power separate and *sui generis*, next it was apparent that a great art must exist somewhere, applicable to this power; not in the pyramids, or in the tombs of Thebes, but in the unwrought quarries of men's minds, so many and so dark.

There was an art missing. If an art, then an artist missing. If the art (as we say of foreign mails) were "due," then the artist was "due." How happened it that this great man never made his appearance? But perhaps he *had*. Many people think Dr. Johnson the *exemplar* of conversational power. I think otherwise, for reasons which I shall soon explain, and far sooner I should look for such an *exemplar* in Burke. But neither Johnson nor Burke, however they might rank as *powers*, was the *artist* that I demanded. Burke valued not at all the reputation of a great performer in conversation; he scarcely contemplated the skill as having a real existence; and a man will never be an artist who does not value his art, or even recognize it as an object distinctly defined. Johnson, again, relied sturdily upon his natural powers for carrying him aggressively through all conversational occasions or difficulties that English society, from its known character and composition, could be supposed likely to bring forward, without caring for any art or system of rules that might give further effect to that power. If a man is strong enough to knock down ninety-nine in a hundred of all antagonists, in spite of any advantages as to

pugilistic science which they may possess over himself, he is not likely to care for the improbable case of a hundredth man appearing with strength equal to his own, superadded to the utmost excess of that artificial skill which is wanting in himself. Against such a contingency it is not worth while going to the cost of a regular pugilistic training. Half a century might not bring up a case of actual call for its application. Or, if it did, for a single *extra* case of that nature, there would always be a resource in the *extra* (and, strictly speaking, foul) arts of kicking, scratching, pinching, and tearing hair.

The conversational powers of Johnson were narrow in compass, however strong within their own essential limits. As a *conditio sine quâ non*, he did not absolutely demand a *personal* contradictor by way of "stoker" to supply fuel and keep up his steam, but he demanded at least a *subject* teeming with elements of known contradictory opinion, whether linked to partisanship or not. His views of all things tended to negation, never to the positive and the creative. Hence may be explained a fact, which cannot have escaped any keen observer of those huge Johnsonian *memorabilia* which we possess,

namely, that the gyration of his flight upon any one question that ever came before him was so exceedingly brief. There was no process, no evolution, no movements of self-conflict or preparation ; a word, a distinction, a pointed antithesis, and, above all, a new abstraction of the logic involved in some popular fallacy, or doubt, or prejudice, or problem, formed the utmost of his efforts. He dissipated some casual perplexity that had gathered in the eddies of conversation, but he contributed nothing to any weightier interest ; he unchoked a strangulated sewer in some blind alley, but what river is there that felt his cleansing power? There is no man that can cite any single error which Dr. Johnson unmasked, or any important truth which he expanded. Nor is this extraordinary. Dr. Johnson had not within himself the fountain of such power, having not a brooding or naturally philosophic intellect. Philosophy in any acquired sense he had none. How else could it have happened that upon David Hartley, upon David Hume, upon Voltaire, upon Rousseau, the true or the false philosophy of his own day, beyond a personal sneer, founded upon some popular slander, he had nothing to say and said nothing?

A new world was moulding itself in Dr. Johnson's meridian hours, new generations were ascending, and "other palms were won." Yet of all this the Doctor suspected nothing. Countrymen and contemporaries of the Doctor's, brilliant men, but (as many think) trifling men, such as Horace Walpole and Lord Chesterfield, already in the middle of that eighteenth century, could read the signs of the great changes advancing, already started in horror from the portents which rose before them in Paris, like the procession of regal phantoms before Macbeth, and have left in their letters records undeniable (such as now read like Cassandra prophecies) that already they had noticed tremors in the ground below their feet, and sounds in the air, running before the great convulsions under which Europe was destined to rock, full thirty years later. Many instances, during the last war, showed us that in the frivolous dandy might often lurk the most fiery and accomplished of *aides-de-camp;* and these cases show that men, in whom the world sees only elegant *roués*, sometimes from carelessness, sometimes from want of opening for display, conceal qualities of penetrating sagacity, and a learned spirit of observation, such

as may be looked for vainly in persons of more solemn and academic pretension. But there was a greater defect in Dr. Johnson, for purposes of conversation, than merely want of eye for the social phenomena rising around him. He had no eye for such phenomena, because he had a somnolent want of interest in them; and why? because he had little interest in man. Having no sympathy with human nature in its struggles, or faith in the progress of man, he could not be supposed to regard with much interest any forerunning symptoms of changes that to him were themselves indifferent. And the reason that he felt thus careless was the desponding taint in his blood. It is good to be of a melancholic temperament, as all the ancient physiologists held, but only if the melancholy is balanced by fiery aspiring qualities, not when it gravitates essentially to the earth. Hence the drooping, despondingcharacter, and the monotony of the estimate which Dr. Johnson applied to life. We were all, in *his* view, miserable, scrofulous wretches; the "strumous diathesis" was developed in our flesh, or soon would be; and, but for his piety, which was the best indication of some greatness latent within him, he would

have suggested to all mankind a nobler use for garters than any which regarded knees. In fact, I believe that, but for his piety, he would not only have counselled hanging in general, but hanged himself in particular. Now, this gloomy temperament, not as an occasional but as a permanent state, is fatal to the power of brilliant conversation, in so far as that power rests upon raising a continual succession of topics, and not merely of using with lifeless talent the topics offered by others. Man is the central interest about which revolve all the fleeting phenomena of life; these secondary interests demand the first; and with the little knowledge about them which must follow from little care about them, there can be no salient fountain of conversational themes. *Pectus—id est quod disertum facit.* From the heart, from an interest of love or hatred, of hope or care, springs all permanent eloquence; and the elastic spring of conversation is gone, if the talker is a mere showy man of talent, pulling at an oar which he detests.

What an index might be drawn up of subjects interesting to human nature, and suggested by the events of the Johnsonian period, upon which the Doctor ought to have talked,

and must have talked if his interest in man had been catholic, but on which the Doctor is not recorded to have uttered one word! Visiting Paris once in his life, he applied himself diligently to the measuring—of what? Of gilt mouldings and diapered panels! Yet books, it will be said, suggest topics as well as life, and the moving sceneries of life. And surely Dr. Johnson had *this* fund to draw upon? No; for, though he had read much in a desultory way, he had studied nothing[1]; and, without that sort of systematic reading, it is but a rare chance that books can be brought to bear effectually, and yet indirectly, upon conversation; whilst to make them directly and formally the subjects of discussion, presupposes either a learned audience or, if the audience is not so, much pedantry and much arrogance in the talker.

[1] "*Had studied nothing.*"—It may be doubted whether Dr. Johnson understood any one thing thoroughly, except Latin; not that he understood even *that* with the elaborate and circumstantial accuracy required for the editing critically of a Latin classic. But if he had less than *that*, he also had more; he *possessed* that language in a way that no extent of mere critical knowledge could confer. He wrote it genially, not as one translating into it painfully from English, but as one using it for his original organ of thinking. And in Latin verse he expressed himself at times with the energy and freedom of a Roman. With Greek his acquaintance was far more slender.

CONVERSATION.

(*Second Paper.*)

The flight of our human hours, not really more rapid at any one moment than another, yet oftentimes to our feelings *seems* more rapid, and this flight startles us like guilty things with a more affecting *sense* of its rapidity, when a distant church-clock strikes in the night-time; or when, upon some solemn summer evening, the sun's disk, after settling for a minute with farewell horizontal rays, suddenly drops out of sight. The record of our loss in such a case seems to us the first intimation of its possibility; as if we could not be made sensible that the hours were perishable until it is announced to us that already they have perished. We feel a perplexity of distress when that which seems to us the cruelest of injuries, a robbery committed upon our dearest possession by the conspiracy of the world outside, seems also as in part a robbery sanctioned by our own collusion. The world, and the customs of the world, never cease to levy taxes upon our time; that is true, and so far the blame is not ours; but the particular *degree* in which we suffer by this robbery depends much upon

the weakness with which we ourselves become parties to the wrong, or the energy with which we resist it. Resisting or not, however, we are doomed to suffer a bitter pang as often as the irrecoverable flight of our time is brought home with keenness to our hearts. The spectacle of a lady floating over the sea in a boat, and waking suddenly from sleep to find her magnificent ropes of pearl-necklace by some accident detached at one end from its fastenings, the loose string hanging down into the water, and pearl after pearl slipping off forever into the abyss, brings before us the sadness of the case. That particular pearl, which at the very moment is rolling off into the unsearchable deeps, carries its own separate reproach to the lady's heart. But it is more deeply reproachful as the representative of so many others, uncounted pearls, that have already been swallowed up irrecoverably while she was yet sleeping, and of many besides that must follow before any remedy can be applied to what we may call this jewelly hemorrhage. A constant hemorrhage of the same kind is wasting our jewelly hours. A day has perished from our brief calendar of days, and *that* we could endure ; but this day is no more than the reit-

eration of many other days, days counted by thousands, that have perished to the same extent and by the same unhappy means—namely, the evil usages of the world made effectual and ratified by our own *lacheté*. Bitter is the upbraiding which we seem to hear from a secret monitor: "My friend, you make very free with your days; pray, how many do you expect to have? What is your rental, as regards the total harvest of days which this life is likely to yield?" Let us consider. Threescore years and ten produce a total sum of twenty-five thousand five hundred and fifty days; to say nothing of some seventeen or eighteen more that will be payable to you as a *bonus* on account of leap-years. Now, out of this total, one third must be deducted at a blow for a single item—namely, sleep. Next, on account of illness, of recreation, and the serious occupations spread over the surface of life, it will be little enough to deduct another third. Recollect also that twenty years will have gone from the earlier end of your life (namely, above seven thousand days) before you can have attained any skill or system, or any definite purpose, in the distribution of your time. Lastly, for that single item, which, among the

Roman armies, was indicated by the technical phrase "*corpus curare*," tendance on the animal necessities — namely, eating, drinking, washing, bathing, and exercise, deduct the smallest allowance consistent with propriety, and, upon summing up all these appropriations, you will not find so much as four thousand days left disposable for direct intellectual culture. Four thousand, or forty hundreds, will be a hundred forties; that is, according to the lax Hebrew method of indicating six weeks by the phrase of "forty days," you will have a hundred bills or drafts on Father Time, value six weeks each, as the whole period available for intellectual labor. A solid block of about eleven and a half continuous years is all that a long life will furnish for the development of what is most august in man's nature. After *that*, the night comes when no man can work; brain and arm will be alike unserviceable; or, if the life should be unusually extended, the vital powers will be drooping as regards all motions in advance.

Limited thus severely in his *direct* approaches to knowledge, and in his approaches to that which is a thousand times more important than knowledge, namely, the conduct and discipline of the knowing faculty, the more clam-

orous is the necessity that a wise man should turn to account any INDIRECT and supplementary means toward the same ends; and amongst these means a chief one by right and potentially is CONVERSATION. Even the primary means, books, study, and meditation, through errors from without and errors from within, are not *that* which they might be made. Too constantly, when reviewing his own efforts for improvement, a man has reason to say (indignantly, as one injured by others; penitentially, as contributing to this injury himself): "Much of my studies have been thrown away; many books which were useless, or worse than useless, I have read; many books which ought to have been read, I have left unread; such is the sad necessity under the absence of all preconceived plan; and the proper road is first ascertained when the journey is drawing to its close." In a wilderness so vast as that of books, to go astray often and widely is pardonable, because it is inevitable; and in proportion as the errors on this primary field of study have been great, it is important to have reaped some compensatory benefits on the secondary field of conversation. Books teach by one machinery, conversation by another; and, if

these resources were trained into correspondence to their own separate ideals, they might become reciprocally the complements of each other. The false selection of books, for instance, might often be rectified at once by the frank collation of experiences which takes place in miscellaneous colloquial intercourse. But other and greater advantages belong to conversation for the effectual promotion of intellectual culture. Social discussion supplies the natural integration for the deficiencies of private and sequestered study. Simply to rehearse, simply to express in words amongst familiar friends, one's own intellectual perplexities, is oftentimes to clear them up. It is well known that the best means of learning is by teaching; the effort that is made for others is made eventually for ourselves; and the readiest method of illuminating obscure conceptions, or maturing such as are crude, lies in an earnest effort to make them apprehensible by others. Even this is but one among the functions filled by conversation. Each separate individual in a company is likely to see any problem or idea under some difference of angle. Each may have some difference of views to contribute, derived either from a different course of read-

ing, or a different tenor of reflection, or perhaps a different train of experience. The advantages of colloquial discussion are not only often commensurate in *degree* to those of study, but they recommend themselves also as being different in *kind;* they are special and *sui generis*. It must, therefore, be important that so great an organ of intellectual development should not be neutralized by mismanagement, as generally it is, or neglected through insensibility to its latent capacities. The importance of the subject should be measured by its relation to the interests of the intellect; and on this principle we do not scruple to think that, in reviewing our own experience of the causes most commonly at war with the free movement of conversation as it ought to be, we are in effect contributing hints for a new chapter in any future "Essay on the Improvement of the Mind." Watts' book under that title is really of little practical use, nor would it ever have been thought so had it not been patronized, in a spirit of partisanship, by a particular section of religious dissenters. Wherever *that* happens the fortune of a book is made; for the sectarian impulse creates a sensible current in favor of the book; and the general or neutral reader

yields passively to the motion of the current, without knowing or caring to know whence it is derived.

Our remarks must of necessity be cursory here, so that they will not need or permit much preparation; but one distinction, which is likely to strike on some minds, as to the two different purposes of conversation, ought to be noticed, since otherwise it will seem doubtful whether we have not confounded them; or, secondly, if we have *not* confounded them, which of the two it is that our remarks contemplate. In speaking above of conversation, we have fixed our view on those uses of conversation which are ministerial to intellectual culture; but, in relation to the majority of men, conversation is far less valuable as an organ of intellectual culture than of social enjoyment. For one man interested in conversation as a means of advancing his studies, there are fifty men whose interest in conversation points exclusively to convivial pleasure. This, as being a more extensive function of conversation, is so far the more dignified function; whilst, on the other hand, such a purpose as direct mental improvement seems by its superior gravity to challenge the higher

rank. Yet, in fact, even here the more general purpose of conversation takes precedency; for, when dedicated to the objects of festal delight, conversation rises by its tendency to the rank of a fine art. It is true that not one man in a million rises to any distinction in this art; nor, whatever France may conceit of herself, has any one nation, amongst other nations, a real precedency in this art. The artists are rare indeed; but still the art, as distinguished from the artist, may, by its difficulties, by the quality of its graces, and by the range of its possible brilliances, take rank as a *fine* art; or, at all events, according to its powers of execution, it tends to that rank; whereas the best order of conversation that is simply ministerial to a purpose of use, cannot pretend to a higher name than that of a *mechanic* art. But these distinctions, though they would form the grounds of a separate treatment in a regular treatise on conversation, may be practically neglected on this occasion, because the hints offered, by the generality of the terms in which they express themselves, may be applied indifferently to either class of conversation. The main diseases, indeed, which obstruct the healthy movement of

conversation, recur everywhere; and alike, whether the object be pleasure or profit in the free interchange of thought, almost universally that free interchange is obstructed in the very same way, by the very same defect of any controlling principle for sustaining the general rights and interests of the company, and by the same vices of self-indulgent indolence, or of callous selfishness, or of insolent vanity, in the individual talkers.

Let us fall back on the recollections of our own experience. In the course of our life we have heard much of what was reputed to be the select conversation of the day, and we have heard many of those who figured at the moment as effective talkers; yet in mere sincerity, and without a vestige of misanthropic retrospect, we must say, that never once has it happened to us to come away from any display of that nature without intense disappointment; and it always appeared to us that this failure (which soon ceased to be a *disappointment*) was inevitable by a necessity of the case. For here lay the stress of the difficulty: almost all depends, in most trials of skill, upon the parity of those who are matched against each other. An ignorant

person supposes that to an able disputant it must be an advantage to have a feeble opponent; whereas, on the contrary, it is ruin to him; for he cannot display his own powers but through something of a corresponding power in the resistance of his antagonist. A brilliant fencer is lost and confounded in playing with a novice; and the same thing takes place in playing at ball, or battledore, or in dancing, where a powerless partner does not enable you to shine the more, but reduces you to mere helplessness, and takes the wind altogether out of your sails. Now, if by some rare good luck the great talker—the protagonist—of the evening has been provided with a commensurate second, it is just possible that something like a brilliant "passage of arms" may be the result, though much, even in that case, will depend on the chances of the moment for furnishing a fortunate theme; and even then, amongst the superior part of the company, a feeling of deep vulgarity and of mountebank display is inseparable from such an ostentatious duel of wit. On the other hand, supposing your great talker to be received like any other visitor, and turned loose upon the company, then he must do one of

two things: either he will talk upon *outré* subsects specially tabooed to his own private use, in which case the great man has the air of a quack-doctor addressing a mob from a street stage; or else he will talk like ordinary people upon popular topics, in which case the company, out of natural politeness, that they may not seem to be staring at him as a lion, will hasten to meet him in the same style; the conversation will become general; the great man will seem reasonable and well-bred; but, at the same time, we grieve to say it, the great man will have been extinguished by being drawn off from his exclusive ground. The dilemma, in short, is this: if the great talker attempts the plan of showing off by firing cannon-shot when everybody else is contented with musketry, then undoubtedly he produces an impression, but at the expense of insulating himself from the sympathies of the company, and standing aloof as a sort of monster hired to play tricks of funambulism for the night. Yet again, if he contents himself with a musket like other people, then for *us*, from whom he modestly hides his talent under a bushel, in what respect is he different from the man who *has* no such talent?

> " If she be not fair to me,
> What care I how fair she be?"

The reader, therefore, may take it upon the *a priori* logic of this dilemma, or upon the evidence of our own experience, that all reputation for brilliant talking is a visionary thing, and rests upon a sheer impossibility—namely, upon such a histrionic performance in a state of insulation from the rest of the company as could not be effected, even for a single time, without a rare and difficult collusion, and could not, even for that single time, be endurable to a man of delicate and honorable sensibilities.

Yet surely Coleridge *had* such a reputation, and without needing any collusion at all; for Coleridge, unless he could have all the talk, would have none. But then this was not conversation; it was not *colloquium*, or talking *with* the company, but *alloquium*, or talking *to* the company. As Madame de Staël observed, Coleridge talked, and *could* talk, only by monologue. Such a mode of systematic trespass upon the conversational rights of a whole party, gathered together under pretence of amusement, is fatal to every purpose of social intercourse, whether that purpose be connected

with direct use and the service of the intellect, or with the general graces and amenities of life. The result is the same, under whatever impulse such an outrage is practised; but the impulse is not always the same; it varies; and so far the criminal intention varies. In some people this gross excess takes its rise in pure arrogance. They are fully aware of their own intrusion upon the general privileges of the company; they are aware of the temper in which it is likely to be received; but they persist wilfully in the wrong, as a sort of homage levied compulsorily upon those who may wish to resist it but hardly *can* do so without a violent interruption, wearing the same shape of indecorum as that which they resent. In most people, however, it is not arrogance which prompts this capital offence against social rights, but a blind selfishness, yielding passively to its own instincts, without being distinctly aware of the degree in which this self-indulgence trespasses on the rights of others. We see the same temper illustrated at times in travelling; a brutal person, as we are disposed at first to pronounce him, but more frequently one who yields unconsciously to a lethargy of selfishness, plants himself at the public fireplace, so as to ex-

clude his fellow-travellers from all but a fraction of the warmth. Yet he does not do this in a spirit of wilful aggression upon others; he has but a glimmering suspicion of the odious shape which his own act assumes to others, for the luxurious torpor of self-indulgence has extended its mists to the energy and clearness of his perceptions. Meantime, Coleridge's habit of soliloquizing through a whole evening of four or five hours had its origin neither in arrogance nor in absolute selfishness. The fact was that he *could* not talk unless he were uninterrupted, and unless he were able to count upon this concession from the company. It was a silent contract between him and his hearers, that nobody should speak but himself. If any man objected to this arrangement, why did he come? For the custom of the place, the *lex loci*, being notorious, by coming at all he was understood to profess his allegiance to the autocrat who presided. It was not, therefore, by an insolent usurpation that Coleridge persisted in monology through his whole life, but in virtue of a concession from the kindness and respect of his friends. You could not be angry with him for using his privilège, for it was a privilege confessed by others, and

a privilege which he was ready to resign as soon as any man demurred to it. But though reconciled to it by these considerations, and by the ability with which he used it, you could not but feel that it worked ill for all parties. Himself it tempted oftentimes into pure garrulity of egotism, and the listeners it reduced to a state of debilitated sympathy or of absolute torpor. Prevented by the custom from putting questions, from proposing doubts, from asking for explanations, reacting by no mode of mental activity, and condemned also to the mental distress of hearing opinions or doctrines stream past them by flights which they must not arrest for a moment, so as even to take a note of them, and which yet they could not often understand, or, seeming to understand, could not always approve, the audience sank at times into a listless condition of inanimate vacuity. To be acted upon forever, but never to react, is fatal to the very powers by which sympathy must grow, or by which intelligent admiration can be evoked. For his own sake, it was Coleridge's interest to have forced his hearers into the active commerce of question and answer, of objection and demur. Not otherwise was it possible that even the at-

tention could be kept from drooping, or the coherency and dependency of the arguments be forced into light,

The French rarely make a mistake of this nature. The graceful levity of the nation could not easily err in this direction, nor tolerate such deliration in the greatest of men. Not the gay temperament only of the French people, but the particular qualities of the French language, which (however poor for the higher purposes of passion) is rich beyond all others for purposes of social intercourse, prompt them to rapid and vivacious exchange of thought. Tediousness, therefore, above all other vices, finds no countenance or indulgence amongst the French, excepting always in two memorable cases, namely: first, the case of tragic dialogue on the stage, which is privileged to be tedious by usage and tradition; and, secondly, the case (authorized by the best usages in living society) of narrators or *racconteurs*. This is a shocking anomaly in the code of French good taste as applied to conversation. Of all the bores whom man in his folly hesitates to hang, and heaven in its mysterious wisdom suffers to propagate their species, the most insufferable is the teller of "good

stories,"—a nuisance that should be put down by cudgelling, by submersion in horse-ponds, or any mode of abatement, as summarily as men would combine to suffocate a vampire or a mad dog. This case excepted, however, the French have the keenest possible sense of all that is odious and all that is ludicrous in prosing, and universally have a horror of *des longuers*. It is not strange, therefore, that Madame de Staël noticed little as extraordinary in Coleridge beyond this one capital monstrosity of unlimited soliloquy, that being a peculiarity which she never could have witnessed in France ; and, considering the burnish of her French tastes in all that concerned colloquial characteristics, it is creditable to her forbearance that she noticed even this rather as a memorable fact than as the inhuman fault which it was. On the other hand, Coleridge was not so forbearing as regarded the brilliant French lady. He spoke of her to ourselves as a very frivolous person, and in short summary terms that disdained to linger upon a subject so inconsiderable. It is remarkable that Goethe and Schiller both conversed with Madame de Staël, like Coleridge, and both spoke of her afterward in the same disparaging

terms as Coleridge. But it is equally remarkable that Baron *William* Humboldt, who was personally acquainted with all the four parties, —Madame de Staël, Goethe, Schiller, and Coleridge,—gave it as his opinion (in letters subsequently published) that the lady had been calumniated through a very ignoble cause—namely, mere ignorance of the French language, or, at least, non-familiarity with the fluencies of *oral* French. Neither Goethe nor Schiller, though well acquainted with written French, had any command of it for purposes of *rapid* conversation; and Humboldt supposes that mere spite at the trouble which they found in limping after the lady so as to catch one thought that she uttered, had been the true cause of their unfavorable sentence upon her. Not malice aforethought, so much as vindictive fury for the sufferings they had endured, accounted for their severity in the opinion of the diplomatic baron. He did not extend the same explanation to Coleridge's case, because, though even then in habits of intercourse with Coleridge, he had not heard of *his* interview with the lady, or of the results from that interview; else what was true of the two German wits was true *a fortiori*

of Coleridge; the Germans at least *read* French and talked it slowly, and occasionally understood it when talked by others. But Coleridge did none of these things. We are all of us well aware that Madame de Staël was *not* a trifler; nay, that she gave utterance at times to truths as worthy to be held oracular as any that were uttered by the three inspired wits—all philosophers, and bound to truth—but all poets, and privileged to be wayward. This we may collect from these anecdotes, that people accustomed to colloquial despotism, and who wield a sceptre within a circle of their own, are no longer capable of impartial judgments, and do not accommodate themselves with patience, or even with justice, to the pretensions of rivals; and were it only for this result of conversational tyranny, it calls clamorously for extinction by some combined action upon the part of society.

Is such a combination on the part of society possible as a sustained effort? We imagine that it *is* in these times, and will be more so in the times which are coming. Formerly, the social meetings of men and women, except only in capital cities, were few; and even in such cities the infusion of female influence was

not broad and powerful enough for the correction of those great aberrations from just ideals which disfigured social intercourse. But great changes are proceeding; were it only by the vast revolution in our *means* of intercourse, laying open every village to the contagion of social temptation, the world of Western Europe is tending more and more to a mode of living in public. Under such a law of life, conversation becomes a vital interest of every hour, that can no more suffer interruption from individual caprice or arrogance than the animal process of respiration from transient disturbances of health. Once, when travelling was rare, there was no fixed law for the usages of public rooms in inns or coffee-houses; the courtesy of individuals was the tenure by which men held their rights. If a morose person detained the newspaper for hours, there was no remedy. At present, according to the circumstances of the case, there are strict regulations, which secure to each individual his own share of the common rights.

A corresponding change will gradually take place in the usages which regulate conversation. It will come to be considered an infringement of the general rights for any man to detain the

conversation, or arrest its movement, for more than a short space of time, which gradually will be more and more defined. This one curtailment of arrogant pretensions will lead to others. Egotism will no longer freeze the openings to intellectual discussions; and conversation will then become, what it never *has* been before, a powerful ally of education and generally of self-culture. The main diseases that besiege conversation at present are—1st. The want of *timing*. Those who are not recalled, by a sense of courtesy and equity, to the continual remembrance that, in appropriating too large a share of the conversation, they are committing a fraud upon their companions, are beyond all control of monitory hints or of reproof, which does not take a direct and open shape of personal remonstrance; but this, where the purpose of the assembly is festive and convivial, bears too harsh an expression for most people's feelings. That objection, however, would not apply to any mode of admonition that was universally established. A public memento carries with it no personality. For instance, in the Roman law-courts, no advocate complained of the *clepsydra*, or water time-piece, which regulated the duration of his

pleadings. Now, such a contrivance would not be impracticable at an after-dinner talk. To invert the clepsydra when all the water had run out, would be an act open to any one of the guests, and liable to no misconstruction, when this check was generally applied, and understood to be a simple expression of public defence, not of private rudeness or personality. The clepsydra ought to be filled with some brilliantly colored fluid to be placed in the centre of the table, and with the capacity, at the very most, of the little minute glasses used for regulating the boiling of eggs. It would obviously be insupportably tedious to turn the glass every two or three minutes; buf to do so occasionally would avail as a sufficient memento to the company. 2d. Conversation suffers from the want of some discretional power lodged in an individual for controlling its movements. Very often it sinks into insipidity through mere accident. Some trifle has turned its current upon ground where few of the company have any thing to say—the commerce of thought languishes; and the consciousness that it *is* languishing about a narrow circle, " unde pedem proferre pudor vetat," operates for the general refrigeration of the company. Now,

the ancient Greeks had an officer appointed over every convivial meeting, whose functions applied to all cases of doubt or interruption that could threaten the genial harmony of the company. We also have such officers, presidents, vice-presidents, etc.; and we need only to extend their powers, so that they may exercise over the movement of the conversation the beneficial influence of the Athenian *symposiarch*. At present the evil is, that conversation has no authorized originator; it is servile to the accidents of the moment; and generally these accidents are merely verbal. Some word or some name is dropped casually in the course of an illustration; and *that* is allowed to suggest a topic, though neither interesting to the majority of the persons present, nor leading naturally into other collateral topics that are more so. Now, in such cases it will be the business of the symposiarch to restore the interest of the conversation, and to rekindle its animation, by recalling it from any tracks of dulness or sterility into which it may have rambled. The natural *excursiveness* of colloquial intercourse, its tendency to advance by subtle links of association, is one of its advantages; but mere *vagrancy* from passive acqui-

escence in the direction given to it by chance or by any verbal accident, is amongst its worst diseases. The business of the symposiarch will be, to watch these morbid tendencies, which are not the deviations of graceful freedom, but the distortions of imbecility and collapse. His business it will also be to derive occasions of discussion bearing a general and permanent interest from the fleeting events of the casual disputes of the day. His business again it will be to bring back a subject that has been imperfectly discussed, and has yielded but half of the interest which it promises, under the interruption of any accident which may have carried the thoughts of the party into less attractive channels. Lastly, it should be an express office of education to form a particular style, cleansed from *verbiage*, from elaborate parenthesis, and from circumlocution, as the only style fitted for a purpose which is one of pure enjoyment, and where every moment used by the speaker is deducted from a public stock.

Many other suggestions for the improvement of conversation might be brought forward within ampler limits; and especially for that class of conversation which moves by discus-

sion a whole code of regulations might be proposed, that would equally promote the interests of the individual speakers and the public interests of the truth involved in the question discussed. Meantime nobody is more aware than we are that no style of conversation is more essentially vulgar than that which moves by disputation. This is the vice of the young and the inexperienced, but especially of those amongst them who are fresh from academic life. But discussion is not necessarily disputation; and the two orders of conversation—*that*, on the one hand, which contemplates an interest of knowledge, and of the self-developing intellect; *that*, on the other hand, which forms one and the widest amongst the gay embellishments of life—will always advance together. Whatever there may remain of illiberal in the first (for, according to the remark of Burke, there is always something illiberal in the severer aspects of study until balanced by the influence of social amenities), will correct itself, or will tend to correct itself, by the model held up in the second; and thus the great organ of social intercourse, by means of speech, which hitherto has done little for man, except through the channel of its ministra-

tions to the direct *business* of daily necessities, will at length rise into a rivalship with books, and become fixed amongst the alliances of intellectual progress, not less than amongst the ornamental accomplishments of convivial life.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

BORN 1775, DIED 1864.

PETITION OF THE THUGS FOR TOLERATION.

By WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

WE, the most religious fraternity of Thugs, having heard it reported throughout the whole extent of India, that toleration is granted by the wisdom of the British Parliament to every diversity of creed, do most humbly submit our grievances to the patient consideration of your Honorable House. We claim a much higher antiquity than the earliest of devotional institutions known in Britain. We are the first-born of Cain. We profit by the holy book he left behind him, covering with fig-leaf what we consider to be unessential or liable to misinterpretation. Our humanity teaches us to confine no dissidents in unhealthy prisons, or to separate no husband from his wife, no father from his children, but merely to offer up man's life-blood to Him who gave man life. Our forefather, Cain, did not cast his brother Abel into a dark cavern infested by

bats and serpents, but slew him as manfully, and dexterously, and instantaneously, as could have been done by the best swordsman in the service of Hyder Ali.

It is reported to us, that there are religions by which it is declared lawful and right to disobey the prince they have sworn to obey, and even to select out of the rabble a leader of singing boys in flowing stoles, sable and white, purple and scarlet; and to place him in opposition to the rightful ruler of the land.

Fables are told in all countries, and this statement hath much the appearance of one. But if there is any truth in it, we would contrast it with the unquestionable history of our exploits and demeanor. Millions, in the vast country round about us, hold it a religious duty for wives to perish by fire at the side of their defunct husbands. We ask no such favor, nor do our wives. Moreover, it is reported that in some island or peninsula on our western coast, not, as here, the willing and wary, but they whose tender age exposes them to be warped at every breath, are sacrificed yearly, thousand after thousand. Inadvertently and involuntarily do they suffer. The unmarried, the adolescent, are debarred from the duties of

marriage, the delights of adolescence. The boys are placed under a knife which would be more innocent were it murderous, that their voices may be acceptable to the chief-priest in his orgies. The girls, if their mothers are unable to sell them advantageously, are delivered up to the discretion of the inferior priesthood, and diligently taught by their spiritual guides, as they call themselves, to answer all psychological queries, and to undergo the most abstruse physiological examinations. We dispute not the propriety or the sanctity of this discipline, leaving it entirely to the arbitration of your Honorable House. We entreat the much smaller favor of liberty to take away life when life hath had its enjoyments, which we have always done gently, considerately, without pain, and without passion. Never do we violate, under the cloak of religion, the prime ordinance of nature, the first command given by the Almighty to the father of our progenitor, Cain.

We lay our cause with confidence at the bar of your Honorable House, claiming and deserving no more than has already been granted by it, to the three or four last religions which have consecutively been dominant in Great

Britain. We hear that these religions are rolling over one another at this instant, and exercising a prodigious volubility of limb and tongue; the elderly and decrepit thrown on its back, cursing and swearing, but holding down the younger by the throat. We take no delight, no interest, in these prolusions; and we demand only simple protection, in meet reward for undivided allegiance.

No prayers do we offer up to God that it may please his Divine Majesty to assist us in sweeping our enemies from his earth; no thanksgivings for having bestrewn it with limbs and carcasses to satiate the hyena and the vulture. We invite our fellow-men to die as becomes them in His service. We lead Death by the hand in quiet and silence to his own door, and we depart in peace. Therefore we, conscious of our innocence and purity, venture to remind our generous protectors that the few we sacrifice are sacrificed to our God alone, and neither to gratify pride nor vengence; that if we slay a few hundreds in the space of a year, our gracious protectors slay occasionally as many thousands between the rising and setting sun. We do not, indeed, with the same fervor and magnificence as our gracious protectors,

sing hymns, beat drums, blow trumpets, and swing bells from lofty towers in jubilee; but we wash our hands, lay aside our daggers, bend our knees, and pray.

Confidently, then, do we approach our gracious protectors, and entreat the same favor, the same liberty of worship, as our fellow-subjects.

THE BENEFITS OF PARLIAMENT.

By WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

CLEAR-SIGHTED and far-sighted men are discussing the benefits of Parliaments, such as time and decay, restoration and reform, have rendered them; and the blush of anger surmounts the blush of shame on the brow of duped credulity. Honester men, whoever they were, purchased those seats which the more cunning from under the hedge-row and from under the counter, have crept into. This is the principal change we have hitherto seen effected: we shall presently see a greater, but not so soon a better; tempestuous times, and cruel throes, and carnage too, probably, must intervene.

Surely such an air of insolence and indifference never was displayed before, at the exposure of broken promises, gross deceptions, connivance at torture, at murder, and somewhat more than connivance at the surreptitious concealment of damnatory evidence. Inertness

ever looks like moderation ; but violent changes are sometimes brought about by tranquil and temporizing men. Nothing is so liable to overturn a State laden with debt, as loose materials thrown into the middle of the road under the fallacious plea of mending and repairing. History opens her pages in vain to people who, without instruction, without reflection, without inquiry, call themselves practical. Never to have looked at a demonstration or a theory is their only claim to the title they assume. And what, forsooth, is the practice of these practicals? To take another course from that which their predecessors had taken ; to undo what little good they may have done ; and to exhaust the people's strength in opening new roads without an object and without a resting-place. This in generalities is metaphor, but in particulars it is truth. Ireland hath exhibited such a wasteful and unprofitable expenditure as utterly demoralized the lower orders, and rendered them almost as contemptible as the higher. It caused improvidence in the one, peculation in the other, together with impudence, exaction, and ingratitude. The better part, which lay between, secreted their savings, left their country, and purchased freeholds in

the United States. This fermenting leaven will there find room for expansion, and will work itself off innoxiously. The priest who would preach disaffection would be puzzled to discover an object for it in the woods and prairies. Quarrels and bloodshed there will be for a time, wherever that race exists, but they will be only internecive. Firmly do I believe, that the calamities which have befallen Ireland were necessary for her welfare, and that never in thousands of years has the hand of Providence been more manifest. By the stupidity and blindness and deafness of rulers, this salutary infliction was providently prolonged; on the other hand, by the formation of a police, the work of a great statesman now departed, that country has been preserved from as sanguinary a desolation as ravaged France at the close of the last century. Want, in one form or other, the *malesuada Fames*, and *turpis Egestas*, lies at the bottom of that vast vacuity, where burn inextinguishably the central fires, which shake at uncalculated periods all the regions of the earth. Something may be done toward the prognostication. To swell the affluent with fresh profusion is sure to wear down the patience of those who are driven to

the wall. Sympathy, at first weak, inoperative, and silent, stirs by degrees and ultimately speaks out. Resistance comes against it from the high and powerful; suppression is aimed at; force recoils, and recoils in splinters; society has then no steadfast basis: the foundations heave; the superstructure rocks. Look round, and see who are the men who make democrats. They stand close above you. Democracy is the blubbery spawn begotten by the drunkenness of aristocracy. Exposed, bare, thriftless, hardy, envy, hatred, and malice are never apart from the ear of the disowned, until the child kills the parent or the parent kills the child. Whoever inherits lands, and the reminiscences growing out of them, deprecates the sad alternative.

"Give us peace in our time, O Lord!" is truly a pious and a righteous prayer. "Give us peace in all times," is one more pious and more righteous. Can we expect it, can we dare to hope it, if we squander on idle and luxurious princes the money extorted from toil and penury to purchase the light of day? Parliament must be commanded by its constituents to revoke all inordinate grants, ancient and recent. Charles II. had no right to confer

on his bastards the patrimony of the people. Patent-offices must be declared abuses; not only are they contrary to equity, but also to the usages of those forefathers to whose weakness we cling, but whose strength and manliness we seem to have forgotten. Let cause be shown why on the nephew or grandson of a king there be voted a dotation; let his services in war or peace be shown to us; let us measure his capacity, let us sound his depth, let us be made familiar with his merits. Sternly will it be asked before long, why the Parliament of 1850 has anticipated future years, and decided for future Parliaments, which alone can be competent arbiters of its necessity. Has it suspicions and doubts whether another house of representatives would be accompanied with other instructions? What one Parliament hath sanctioned, another may annul. If the people may give directions for revoking any old statute, it surely may give directions for revoking a grant of its money while the money is yet unpaid. To what extent of royal consanguinity must we carry our heavy taxation? By degrees there may be as many claimants as claim the green turban for descent from the Prophet. I never heard that the head of the

family, reigning at Constantinople, allowed them more than this distinction ; or demanded from his people, when he could demand all they possess, the value of one zechin for his relatives. Little did he ever think of surrounding them with muftis and horse-tails, with the pageantry of religion and the pomp of war.

If we are to bow down and worship whatever images it may please the high menials of the palace to set up before us, be it permitted to remark that no images are rendered more venerable by a profusion of jewelry, a redundance of drapery, a flutter of embroidery, or gilding from head to foot. If we are to distinguish the features, if we are to admire the workmanship, it is of no advantage that they may be poised on columns a hundred feet above us. The barbarian may adore his own carving, a thing viler than himself ; but civilized man requires the voice, the activity, the attention, the sympathy, of those to whom he assigns a station and is willing to respect.

SYDNEY SMITH.

BORN 1771, DIED 1845.

FALLACIES OF ANTI-REFORMERS.

By SYDNEY SMITH.

The Book of Fallacies: from Unfinished Papers of Jeremy Bentham. By a Friend.

THERE are a vast number of absurd and mischievous fallacies, which pass readily in the world for sense and virtue, while in truth they tend only to fortify error and encourage crime. Mr. Bentham has enumerated the most conspicuous of these in the book before us.

Whether it be necessary there should be a middleman between the cultivator and the possessor, learned economists have doubted; but neither gods, men, nor booksellers can doubt the necessity of a middleman between Mr. Bentham and the public. Mr. Bentham is long; Mr. Bentham is occasionally involved and obscure; Mr. Bentham invents new and alarming expressions; Mr. Bentham loves division and subdivision—and he loves method

itself, more than its consequences. Those only, therefore, who know his originality, his knowledge, his vigor, and his boldness, will recur to the works themselves. The great mass of readers will not purchase improvement at so dear a rate; but will choose rather to become acquainted with Mr. Bentham through the medium of reviews—after that eminent philosopher has been washed, trimmed, shaved, and forced into clean linen. One great use of a review, indeed, is to make men wise in ten pages, who have no appetite for a hundred pages; to condense nourishment, to work with pulp and essence, and to guard the stomach from idle burden and unmeaning bulk. For half a page, sometimes for a whole page, Mr. Bentham writes with a power which few can equal; and by selecting and omitting, an admirable style may be formed from the text. Using this liberty, we shall endeavor to give an account of Mr. Bentham's doctrines, for the most part in his own words. Wherever an expression is particularly happy, let it be considered to be Mr. Bentham's—the dulness we take to ourselves.

OUR WISE ANCESTORS—*the Wisdom of our Ancestors—the Wisdom of Ages—Venerable An-*

tiquity—Wisdom of Old Times.—This mischievous and absurd fallacy springs from the grossest perversion of the meaning of words. Experience is certainly the mother of wisdom, and the old have, of course, a greater experience than the young; but the question is who are the old? and who are the young? Of *individuals* living at the same period, the oldest has, of course, the greatest experience; but among *generations* of men the reverse of this is true. Those who come first (our ancestors) are the young people, and have the least experience. We have added to their experience the experience of many centuries; and, therefore, as far as experience goes, are wiser, and more capable of forming an opinion than they were. The real feeling should be, *not*, can we be so presumptuous as to put our opinions in opposition to those of our ancestors? but can such young, ignorant, inexperienced persons as our ancestors necessarily were, be expected to have understood a subject as well as those who have seen so much more, lived so much longer, and enjoyed the experience of so many centuries? All this cant, then, about our ancestors is merely an abuse of words, by transferring phrases true of contemporary men to succeed-

ing ages. Whereas (as we have before observed) of living men the oldest has, *cæteris paribus*, the most experience; of generations, the oldest has, *cæteris paribus*, the least experience. Our ancestors, up to the Conquest, were children in arms; chubby boys in the time of Edward the First; stripplings under Elizabeth; men in the reign of Queen Anne; and *we* only are the white-bearded, silver-headed ancients, who have treasured up, and are prepared to profit by, all the experience which human life can supply. We are not disputing with our ancestors the palm of talent, in which they may or may not be our superiors, but the palm of experience in which it is utterly impossible they can be our superiors. And yet, whenever the Chancellor comes forward to protect some abuse, or to oppose some plan which has the increase of human happiness for its object, his first appeal is always to the wisdom of our ancestors; and he himself, and many noble lords who vote with him, are, to this hour, persuaded that all alterations and amendments on their devices are an unblushing controversy between youthful temerity and mature experience!—and so, in truth they are—only that much-loved magistrate mistakes the young for

the old, and the old for the young—and is guilty of that very sin against experience which he attributes to the lovers of innovation.

We cannot of course be supposed to maintain that our ancestors wanted wisdom, or that they were necessarily mistaken in their institutions, because their means of information were more limited than ours. But we do confidently maintain that when we find it expedient to change any thing which our ancestors have enacted, we are the experienced persons, and not they. The quantity of talent is always varying in any great nation. To say that we are more or less able than our ancestors is an assertion that requires to be explained. All the able men of all ages, who have ever lived in England, probably possessed, if taken altogether, more intellect than all the able men England can now boast of. But if authority must be resorted to rather than reason, the question is, What was the wisdom of that single age which enacted the law, compared with the wisdom of the age which proposes to alter it? What are the eminent men of one and the other period? If you say that our ancestors were wiser than us, mention your date and year. If the splendor of names is

equal, are the circumstances the same? If the circumstances are the same, we have a superiority of experience, of which the difference between the two periods is the measure. It is necessary to insist upon this; for upon sacks of wool, and on benches forensic, sit grave men, and agricolous persons in the Commons, crying out: "Ancestors, ancestors! *hodie non!* Saxons, Danes, save us! Fiddlefrig, help us! Howel, Ethelwolf, protect us!" Any cover for nonsense—any veil for trash—any pretext for repelling the innovations of conscience and of duty!

"So long as they keep to vague generalities—so long as the two objects of comparison are each of them taken in the lump—wise ancestors in one lump, ignorant and foolish mob of modern times in the other—the weakness of the fallacy may escape detection. But let them assign for the period of superior wisdom any determinate period whatsoever, not only will the groundlessness of the notion be apparent (class being compared with class in that period and the present one), but, unless the antecedent period be comparatively speaking a very modern one, so wide will be the disparity, and to such an amount in favor of modern times, that, in comparison of the lowest class of the people in

modern times (always supposing them proficient in the art of reading, and their proficiency employed in the reading of newspapers), the very highest and best-informed class of these wise ancestors will turn out to be grossly ignorant.

"Take, for example, any year in the reign of Henry the Eighth, from 1509 to 1546. At that time the House of Lords would probably have been in possession of by far the larger proportion of what little instruction the age afforded; in the House of Lords, among the laity, it might even then be a question whether, without exception, their lordships were all of them able so much as to read. But even supposing them all in the fullest possession of that useful art, political science being the science in question, what instruction on the subject could they meet with at that time of day?

"On no one branch of legislation was any book extant from which, with regard to the circumstances of the then present times, any useful instruction could be derived: distributive law, penal law, international law, political economy, so far from existing as sciences, had scarcely obtained a name: in all those departments under the head of *quid faciendum*, a mere blank: the whole literature of the age consisted of a meagre chronicle or two, containing short memorandums of the usual occurrences of war and peace, battles, sieges, executions, revels,

deaths, births, processions, ceremonies, and other external events; but with scarce a speech or an incident that could enter into the composition of any such work as a history of the human mind—with scarce an attempt at investigation into causes, characters, or the state of the people at large. Even when at last, little by little, a scrap or two of political instruction came to be obtainable, the proportion of error and mischievous doctrine mixed up with it was so great, that whether a blank unfilled might not have been less prejudicial than a blank thus filled, may reasonably be matter of doubt.

"If we come down to the reign of James the First, we shall find that Solomon of his time eminently eloquent as well as learned, not only among crowned but among uncrowned heads, marking out for prohibition and punishment the practices of devils and witches, and without the slightest objection on the part of the great characters of that day in their high situations, consigning men to death and torment for the misfortune of not being so well acquainted as he was with the composition of the Godhead.

"Under the name of Exorcism the Catholic liturgy contains a form of procedure for driving out devils;—even with the help of this instrument, the operation cannot be performed with the desired

success, but by an operator qualified by holy orders for the working of this as well as so many other wonders. In our days and in our country the same object is attained, and beyond comparison more effectually, by so cheap an instrument as a common newspaper; before this talisman, not only devils but ghosts, vampires, witches, and all their kindred tribes, are driven out of the land, never to return again! The touch of holy water is not so intolerable to them as the bare smell of printers' ink."

FALLACY OF IRREVOCABLE LAWS.—A law, says Mr. Bentham (no matter to what effect) is proposed to a legislative assembly, who are called upon to reject it, upon the single ground, that by those who in some former period exercised the same power, a regulation was made, having for its object to preclude for ever, or to the end of an unexpired period, all succeeding legislators from enacting a law to any such effect as that now proposed.

Now it appears quite evident that, at every period of time, every legislature must be endowed with all those powers which the exigency of the times may require; and any attempt to infringe on this power is inadmissible and absurd. The sovereign power, at any one period, can only form a blind guess at the

measures which may be necessary for any future period ; but by this principle of immutable laws, the government is transferred from those who are necessarily the best judges of what they want, to others who can know little or nothing about the matter. The thirteenth century decides for the fourteenth. The fourteenth makes laws for the fifteenth. The fifteenth hermetically seals up the sixteenth, which tyrannizes over the seventeenth, which again tells the eighteenth how it is to act, under circumstances which cannot be foreseen, and how it is to conduct itself in exigencies which no human wit can anticipate.

"Men who have a century more experience to ground their judgments on, surrender their intellect to men who had a century less experience, and who, unless that deficiency constitutes a claim, have no claim to preference. If the prior generation were, in respect of intellectual qualification, ever so much superior to the subsequent generation,—if it understood so much better than the subsequent generation itself the interest of that subsequent generation,—could it have been in an equal degree anxious to promote that interest, and consequently equally attentive to those facts with which, though in order to form a judgment it ought to have been,

it is impossible that it should have been acquainted? In a word, will its love for that subsequent generation be quite so great as that same generation's love for itself?

"Not even here, after a moment's deliberate reflection will the assertion be in the affirmative. And yet it is their prodigious anxiety for the welfare of their posterity that produces the propensity of these sages to tie up the hands of this same posterity for evermore—to act as guardians to its perpetual and incurable weakness, and take its conduct for ever out of its own hands.

"If it be right that the conduct of the nineteenth century should be determined not by its own judgment but by that of the eighteenth, it will be equally right that the conduct of the twentieth century should be determined not by its own judgment but by that of the nineteenth. And if the same principle were still pursued, what at length would be the consequence?—that in process of time the practice of legislation would be at an end. The conduct and fate of all men would be determined by those who neither knew nor cared any thing about the matter; and the aggregate body of the Living would remain for ever in subjection to an inexorable tyranny, exercised as it were by the aggregate body of the Dead."

The despotism, as Mr. Bentham well observes, of Nero or Caligula would be more

tolerable than an *irrevocable law*. The despot, through fear or favor, or in a lucid interval, might relent; but how are the Parliament, who made the Scotch Union, for example, to be awakened from that dust in which they repose—the jobber and the patriot, the speaker and the door-keeper, the silent voters and the men of rich allusions, Cannings and cultivators, Barings and beggars—making irrevocable laws for men who toss their remains about with spades, and use the relics of these legislators to give breadth to broccoli, and to aid the vernal eruption of asparagus?

If the law be good, it will support itself; if bad, it should not be supported by *irrevocable theory*, which is never resorted to but as the veil of abuses. All living men must possess the supreme power over their own happiness at every particular period. To suppose that there is any thing which a whole nation cannot do, which they deem to be essential to their happiness, and that they cannot do it, because *another* generation, long ago dead and gone, said it must not be done, is mere nonsense. While you are captain of the vessel, do what you please; but the moment you quit the ship I become as omnipotent as you. You may

leave me as much *advice* as you please, but you cannot leave me *commands;* though, in fact, this is the only meaning which can be applied to what are called irrevocable laws. It appeared to the legislature for the time being to be of immense importance to make such and such a law. Great good was gained, or great evil avoided, by enacting it. Pause before you alter an institution which has been deemed to be of so much importance. This is prudence and common-sense; the rest is the exaggeration of fools, or the artifice of knaves, who eat up fools. What endless nonsense has been talked of our navigation laws! What wealth has been sacrificed to either before they were repealed! How impossible it appeared to Noodledom to repeal them! They were considered of the irrevocable class—a kind of law over which the dead only were omnipotent, and the living had no power. Frost, it is true, cannot be put off by act of Parliament, nor can spring be accelerated by any majority of both houses. It is, however, quite a mistake to suppose that any alteration of any of the articles of union is as much out of the jurisdiction of Parliament as these meteorological changes. In every year, and every day of that

year, living men have a right to make their own laws and manage their own affairs; to break through the tyranny of the antespirants—the people who breathed before them,—and to do what they please for themselves. Such supreme power cannot indeed be well exercised by the people at large; it must be exercised therefore by the delegates, or Parliament, whom the people choose; and such Parliament, disregarding the superstitious reverence for *irrevocable laws*, can have no other criterion of wrong and right than that of public utility.

When a law is considered as immutable, and the immutable law happens at the same time to be too foolish and mischievous to be endured, instead of being repealed, it is clandestinely evaded, or openly violated; and thus the authority of all law is weakened.

Where a nation has been ancestorially bound by foolish and improvident treaties, ample notice must be given of their termination. Where the State has made ill-advised grants, or rash bargains with individuals, it is necessary to grant proper compensation. The most difficult case, certainly, is that of the union of nations, where a smaller number of the weaker nation is admitted into the larger senate of the

greater nation, and will be overpowered if the question come to a vote; but the lesser nation must run this risk; it is not probable that any violation of articles will take place till they are absolutely called for by extreme necessity. But let the danger be what it may, no danger is so great, no supposition so foolish, as to consider any human law as irrevocable. The shifting attitude of human affairs would often render such a condition an intolerable evil to all parties. The absurd jealousy of our countrymen at the union secured heritable jurisdiction to the owners; nine and thirty years afterward they were abolished, in the very teeth of the act of union, and to the evident promotion of the public good.

CONTINUITY OF A LAW BY OATH.—The sovereign of England at his coronation takes an oath to maintain the laws of God, the true profession of the Gospel, and the Protestant religion, as established by law, and to preserve to the bishops and clergy of this realm the rights and privileges which by law appertain to them, and to preserve inviolate the doctrine, discipline, worship, and the government of the Church. It has been suggested that by this oath the king stands precluded from

granting those indulgencies to the Irish Catholics which are included in the bill for their emancipation. The true meaning of these provisions is of course to be decided, if doubtful, by the same legislative authority which enacted them. But a different notion it seems is now afloat. The king for the time being (we are putting an imaginary case) thinks as an individual that he is not maintaining the doctrine, discipline, and rights of the Church of England, if he grant any extension of civil rights to those who are not members of that Church; that he is violating his oath by so doing. This oath, then, according to this reasoning, is the great palladium of the Church. As long as it remains inviolate the Church is safe. How, then, can any monarch who has taken it ever consent to repeal it? How can he, consistently with his oath for the preservation of the privileges of the Church, contribute his part to throw down so strong a bulwark as he deems his oath to be! The oath, then, cannot be altered. It must remain under all circumstances of society the same. The king who has taken it is bound to continue it, and to refuse his sanction to any bill for its future alteration, because it prevents him, and, he

must needs think, will prevent others, from granting dangerous immunities to the enemies of the Church.

Here, then, is an irrevocable law—a piece of absurd tyranny exercised by the rulers of Queen Anne's time upon the government of 1825—a certain art of potting and preserving a kingdom in one shape, attitude, and flavor—and in this way it is that an institution appears like old ladies' sweetmeats and made wines —Apricot Jam 1822—Currant Wine 1819—Court of Chancery 1427—Penal Laws against Catholics 1676. The difference is, that the ancient woman is a better judge of mouldy commodities than the illiberal part of his Majesty's ministers. The potting lady goes sniffing about and admitting light and air to prevent the progress of decay; while to him of the woolsack all seems doubly dear in proportion as it is antiquated, worthless, and unusable. It ought not to be in the power of the sovereign to tie up his own hands, much less the hands of his successors. If the sovereign were to oppose his own opinion to that of the two other branches of the legislature, and himself to decide what he considers to be for the benefit of the Protestant Church,

and what not, a king who has spent his whole life in the frivolous occupation of a court may by perversion of understanding conceive measures most salutary to the Church to be most pernicious, and, persevering obstinately in his own error, may frustrate the wisdom of his Parliament, and perpetuate the most inconceivable folly! If Henry VIII had argued in this manner we should have had no Reformation. If George III had always argued in this manner the Catholic code would never have been relaxed. And thus a king, however incapable of forming an opinion upon serious subjects, has nothing to do but pronounce the word *Conscience*, and the whole power of the country is at his feet.

Can there be greater absurdity than to say that a man is acting contrary to his conscience who surrenders his opinion upon any subject to those who must understand the subject better than himself? I think my ward has a claim to the estate; but the best lawyers tell me he has none. I think my son capable of undergoing the fatigues of a military life; but the best physicians say he is much too weak. My Parliament say this measure will do the Church no harm; but I think it very pernicious to the

Church. Am I acting contrary to my conscience because I apply much higher intellectual powers than my own to the investigation and protection of these high interests?

"According to the form in which it is conceived, any such engagement is in effect either a check or a license:—a license under the appearance of a check, and for that very reason but the more efficiently operative.

"Chains to the man in power? Yes:—but only such as he figures with on the stage; to the spectators as imposing, to himself as light as possible. Modelled by the wearer to suit his own purposes, they serve to rattle but not to restrain.

"Suppose a king of Great Britain and Ireland to have expressed his fixed determination, in the event of any proposed law being tendered to him for his assent, to refuse such assent, and this not on the persuasion that the law would not be 'for the utility of the subjects,' but that by his coronation oath he stands precluded from so doing, the course proper to be taken by Parliament, the course pointed out by principle and precedent, would be a vote of abdication—a vote declaring the king to have abdicated his royal authority, and that, as in case of death or incurable mental derangement, now is the time for the person next in succession to take his place.

"In the celebrated case in which a vote to this effect was actually passed, the declaration of abdication was, in lawyers' language, a fiction—in plain truth, a falsehood, and that falsehood a mockery; not a particle of his power was it the wish of James to abdicate, to part with, but to increase it to a maximum was the manifest object of all his efforts. But in the case here supposed, with respect to a part, and that a principal part of the royal authority, the will and purpose to abdicate is actually declared; and this being such a part, without which the remainder cannot, 'to the utility of the subjects,' be exercised, the remainder must of necessity be, on their part and for their sake, added."

SELF-TRUMPETER'S FALLACY.—Mr. Bentham explains the self-trumpeter's fallacy as follows:

"There are certain men in office who, in discharge of their functions, arrogate to themselves a degree of probity, which is to exclude all imputations and all inquiry. Their assertions are to be deemed equivalent to proof, their virtues are guaranties for the faithful discharge of their duties, and the most implicit confidence is to be reposed in them on all occasions. If you expose any abuse, propose any reform, call for securities, inquiry, or measures to promote publicity, they set up a cry of

surprise, amounting almost to indignation, as if their integrity were questioned or their honor wounded. With all this, they dexterously mix up intimations that the most exalted patriotism, honor, and perhaps religion, are the only sources of all their actions."

Of course every man will try what he can effect by these means; but (as Mr. Bentham observes) if there be any one maxim in politics more certain than another, it is that no possible degree of virtue in the governor can render it expedient for the governed to dispense with good laws and good institutions. Madame De Staël (to her disgrace) said to the Emperor of Russia: "Sire, your character is a constitution for your country, and your conscience its guaranty." His reply was: "Quand cela serait, je ne serais jamais qu' un accident heureux"; and this we think one of the truest and most brilliant replies ever made by monarch.

LAUDATORY PERSONALITIES.—"The object of laudatory personalities is to effect the rejection of a measure on account of the alleged good character of those who oppose it, and the argument advanced is: 'The measure is rendered unnecessary by the virtues of those who are in power—their opposition

is a sufficient authority for the rejection of the measure. The measure proposed implies a distrust of the members of His Majesty's Government ; but so great is their integrity, so complete their disinterestedness, so uniformly do they prefer the public advantage to their own, that such a measure is altogether unnecessary. Their disapproval is sufficient to warrant an opposition ; precautions can only be requisite where danger is apprehended : here the high character of the individuals in question is a sufficient guaranty against any ground of alarm.' "

The panegyric goes on increasing with the dignity of the lauded person. All are honorable and delightful men. The person who opens the door of the office is a person of approved fidelity ; the junior clerk is a model of assiduity ; all the clerks are models—seven years' models, eight years' models, nine years' models, and upward. The first clerk is a paragon, and ministers the very perfection of probity and intelligence ; and as for the highest magistrate of the state, no adulation is equal to describe the extent of his various merits ! It is too condescending, perhaps, to refute such folly as this. But we would just observe that, if the propriety of the measure in question be

established by direct arguments, these must be at least as conclusive against the character of those who oppose it as their character can be against the measure.

The effect of such an argument is to give men of good or reputed good character the power of putting a negative on any question not agreeable to their inclinations.

"In every public trust the legislator should, for the purpose of prevention, suppose the trustee disposed to break the trust in every imaginable way in which it would be possible for him to reap from the breach of it any personal advantage. This is the principle on which public institutions ought to be formed, and when it is applied to all men indiscriminately, it is injurious to none. The practical inference is to oppose to such possible (and what will always be probable) breaches of trust every bar that can be opposed consistently with the power requisite for the efficient and due discharge of the trust. Indeed, these arguments, drawn from the supposed virtues of men in power, are opposed to the first principles on which all laws proceed.

"Such allegations of individual virtue are never supported by specific proof, are scarce ever susceptible of specific disproof, and specific disproof, if offered, could not be admitted in either House of

Parliament. If attempted elsewhere, the punishment would fall not on the unworthy trustee, but on him by whom the unworthiness had been proved."

FALLACIES OF PRETENDED DANGER—*Imputations of bad design—of bad character—of bad motives—of inconsistency—of suspicious connections.*—The object of this class of fallacies is to draw aside attention from the measure to the man, and this in such a manner that, for some real or supposed defect in the author of the measure, a corresponding defect shall be imputed to the measure itself. Thus, "the author of the measure entertains a bad design; therefore the measure is bad. His character is bad, therefore the measure is bad; his motive is bad, I will vote against the measure. On former occasions this same person who proposed the measure was its enemy, therefore the measure is bad. He is on a footing of intimacy with this or that dangerous man, or has been seen in his company, or is suspected of entertaining some of his opinions, therefore the measure is bad. He bears a name that at a former period was borne by a set of men now no more, by whom bad principles were entertained, therefore the measure is bad!"

Now, if the measure be really inexpedient, why not at once show it to be so? If the measure be good, is it bad because a bad man is its author? If bad, is it good because a good man has produced it? What are these arguments but to say to the assembly who are to be the judges of any measure, that their imbecility is too great to allow them to judge of the measure by its own merits, and that they must have recourse to distant and feebler probabilities for that purpose?

"In proportion to the degree of efficiency with which a man suffers these instruments of deception to operate upon his mind, he enables bad men to exercise over him a sort of power, the thought of which ought to cover him with shame. Allow this argument the effect of a conclusive one, you put it into the power of any man to draw you at pleasure from the support of every measure which in your own eyes is good, to force you to give your support to any and every measure which in your own eyes is bad. Is it good?—the bad man embraces it, and by the supposition, you reject it. Is it bad?—he vituperates it, and that suffices for driving you into its embrace. You split upon the rocks because he has avoided them; you miss the harbor because he has steered into it! Give yourself up to any such blind

antipathy, you are no less in the power of your adversaries than if, by a correspondently irrational sympathy and obsequiousness, you put yourself into the power of your friends.

" Besides, nothing but laborious application and a clear and comprehensive intellect can enable a man on any given subject to employ successfully relevant arguments drawn from the subject itself. To employ personalities, neither labor nor intellect is required. In this sort of contest the most idle and the most ignorant are quite on a par with, if not superior to, the most industrious and the most highly-gifted individuals. Nothing can be more convenient for those who would speak without the trouble of thinking. The same ideas are brought forward over and over again, and all that is required is to vary the turn of expression. Close and relevant arguments have very little hold on the passions, and serve rather to quell than to inflame them; while in personalities there is always something stimulant, whether on the part of him who praises or him who blames. Praise forms a kind of connection between the party praising and the party praised, and vituperation gives an air of courage and independence to the party who blames.

" Ignorance and indolence, friendship and enmity, concurring and conflicting interest, servility and independence, all conspire to give personalities

the ascendency they so unhappily maintain. The more we lie under the influence of our own passions, the more we rely on others being affected in a similar degree. A man who can repel these injuries with dignity may often convert them into triumph : 'Strike me, but hear,' says he, and the fury of his antagonist redounds to his own discomfiture."

NO INNOVATION!—To say that all things new are bad is to say that all old things were bad in their commencement: for of all the old things ever seen or heard of there is not one that was not once new. Whatever is now establishment was once innovation. The first inventor of pews and parish clerks was no doubt considered as a Jacobin in his day. Judges, juries, criers of the court, are all the inventions of ardent spirits, who filled the world with alarm, and were considered as the great precursors of ruin and dissolution. No inoculation, no turnpikes, no reading, no writing, no popery! The fool sayeth in his heart and crieth with his mouth, "I will have nothing new!"

FALLACY OF DISTRUST!—"*What's at the bottom?*"—This fallacy begins with a virtual admission of the propriety of the measure con-

sidered in itself, and thus demonstrates its own futility, and cuts up from under itself the ground which it endeavors to make. A measure is to be rejected for something that, by bare possibility, may be found amiss in some other measure! This is vicarious reprobation; upon this principle Herod instituted his massacre. It is the argument of a driveller to other drivellers, who says: "We are not able to decide upon the evil when it arises; our only safe way is to act upon the general apprehension of evil."

OFFICIAL MALEFACTOR'S SCREEN.—"*Attack us, you attack government.*"—If this notion is acceded to, every one who derives at present any advantage from misrule has it in fee-simple, and all abuses, present and future, are without remedy. So long as there is any thing amiss in conducting the business of government, so long as it can be made better, there can be no other mode of bringing it nearer to perfection than the indication of such imperfections as at the time being exist.

"But so far is it from being true that a man's aversion or contempt for the hands by which the powers of government, or even for the system under

which they are exercised, is a proof of his aversion or contempt toward government itself, that, even in proportion to the strength of that aversion or contempt, it is a proof of the opposite affection. What, in consequence of such contempt or aversion, he wishes for is not that there be no hands at all to exercise these powers, but that the hands may be better regulated;—not that those powers should not be exercised at all, but that they should be better exercised ;—not that in the exercise of them no rules at all should be pursued, but that the rules by which they are exercised should be a better set of rules.

" All government is a trust, every branch of government is a trust, and immemorially acknowledged so to be ; it is only by the magnitude of the scale that public differ from private trusts. I complain of the conduct of a person in the character of guardian, as domestic guardian, having the care of a minor or insane person. In so doing do I say that guardianship is a bad institution ? Does it enter into the head of any one to suspect me of so doing ? I complain of an individual in the character of a commercial agent or assignee of the effects of an insolvent. In so doing do I say that commercial agency is a bad thing ? that the practice of vesting in the hands of trustees or assignees the effects of an insolvent for the purpose of their being divided

among his creditors is a bad practice? Does any such conceit ever enter into the head of man as that of suspecting me of so doing?"

There are no complaints against government in Turkey—no motions in Parliament, no *Morning Chronicles*, and no *Edinburgh Reviews:* yet of all countries in the world it is that in which revolts and revolutions are the most frequent.

It is so far from true that no good government can exist consistently with such disclosure, that no good government can exist without it. It is quite obvious to all who are capable of reflection that by no other means than by lowering the governors in the estimation of the people can there be hope or chance of beneficial change. To infer from this wise endeavor to lessen the existing rulers in the estimation of the people, a wish of dissolving the government, is either artifice or error. The physician who intentionally weakens the patient by bleeding him has no intention he should perish.

The greater the quantity of respect a man receives, independently of good conduct, the less good is his behavior likely to be. It is the interest, therefore, of the public in the case of

each to see that the respect paid to him should, as completely as possible, depend upon the goodness of his behavior in the execution of his trust. But it is, on the contrary, the interest of the trustee that the respect, the money, or any other advantage he receives in virtue of his office, should be as great, as secure, and as independent of conduct as possible. Soldiers expect to be shot at ; public men must expect to be attacked, and sometimes unjustly. It keeps up the habit of considering their conduct as exposed to scrutiny ; on the part of the people at large it keeps alive the expectation of witnessing such attacks, and the habit of looking out for them. The friends and supporters of government have always greater facility in keeping and raising it up than its adversaries have for lowering it.

ACCUSATION-SCARER'S DEVICE.—"*Infamy must attach somewhere.*"—This fallacy consists in representing the character of a calumniator as necessarily and justly attaching upon him who, having made a charge of misconduct against any person possessed of political power or influence, fails of producing evidence sufficient for their conviction.

"If taken as a general proposition, applying to all public accusations, nothing can be more mischievous as well as fallacious. Supposing the charge unfounded, the delivery of it may have been accompanied with *mala fides* (consciousness of its injustice), with *temerity* only, or it may have been perfectly blameless. It is in the first case alone that infamy can with propriety attach upon him who brings it forward. A charge really groundless may have been honestly *believed* to be well founded, *i. e.*, believed with a sort of provisional credence, sufficient for the purpose of engaging a man to do his part toward the bringing about an investigation, but without sufficient reasons. But a charge may be perfectly groundless without attaching the smallest particle of blame upon him who brings it forward. Suppose him to have heard from one or more, presenting themselves to him in the character of percipient witnesses, a story which, either *in toto*, or perhaps only in *circumstances*, though in circumstances of the most material importance, should prove false and mendacious, how is the person who hears this and acts accordingly to blame? What sagacity can enable a man previously to legal investigation, a man who has no power that can enable him to insure correctness or completeness on the part of this extrajudicial testimony, to guard against deception in such a case?"

FALLACY OF FALSE CONSOLATION.—"*What is the matter with you?—What would you have?—Look at the people there, and there; think how much better off you are than they are.—Your prosperity and liberty are objects of their envy; your institutions, models of their imitation.*"—It is not the desire to look to the bright side that is blamed, but when a particular suffering, produced by an assigned cause, has been pointed out, the object of many apologists is to turn the eyes of inquirers and judges into any other quarter in preference. If a man's tenants were to come with a general encomium on the prosperity of the country instead of a specified sum, would it be accepted? In a court of justice in an action for damages did ever any such device occur as that of pleading assets in the hands of a third person? There is in fact no country so poor and so wretched in every element of prosperity in which matter for this argument might not be found. Were the prosperity of the country tenfold as great as at present, the absurdity of the argument would not in the least degree be lessened. Why should the smallest evil be endured which can be cured because others suffer patiently under greater evils? Should the smallest improvement attainable be neglected

because others remain contented in a state of still greater inferiority?

"Seriously and pointedly in the character of a bar to any measure of relief, no, nor to the most trivial improvement, can it ever be employed. Suppose a bill brought in for converting an impassable road anywhere into a passable one, would any man stand up to oppose it who could find nothing better to urge against it than the multitude and goodness of the roads we have already? No: when in the character of a serious bar to the measure in hand, be that measure what it may, an argument so palpably inapplicable is employed, it can only be for the purpose of creating a diversion;—of turning aside the minds of men from the subject really in hand to a picture which, by its beauty, it is hoped, may engross the attention of the assembly, and make them forget for the moment for what purpose they came there."

THE QUIETEST, OR NO COMPLAINT.—"A new law of measure being proposed in the character of a remedy for some incontestable abuse or evil, an objection is frequently started to the following effect:—'The measure is unnecessary. Nobody complains of disorder in that shape, in which it is the aim of your measure to propose a remedy to it. But even when *no* cause of complaint has been

found to exist, especially under governments which admit of complaints, men have in general not been slow to complain ; much less where any just cause of complaint has existed.' The argument amounts to this :—Nobody complains, therefore nobody suffers. It amounts to a *veto* on all measures of precaution or prevention, and goes to establish a maxim in legislation directly opposed to the most ordinary prudence of common life ; it enjoins us to build no parapets to a bridge till the number of accidents has raised a universal clamor."

PROCRASTINATOR'S ARGUMENT.—"*Wait a little, this is not the time.*"—This is the common argument of men who, being in reality hostile to a measure, are ashamed or afraid of appearing to be so. *To-day* is the plea—*eternal exclusion* commonly the object. It is the same sort of quirk as a plea of abatement in law—which is never employed but on the side of a dishonest defendant, whose hope it is to obtain an ultimate triumph, by overwhelming his adversary with despair, impoverishment, and lassitude. Which is the properest day to do good ? which is the properest day to remove a nuisance ? we answer, the very first day a man can be found to propose the removal of it ; and whoever opposes the removal of it on that day

will (if he dare) oppose it on every other. There is in the minds of many feeble friends to virtue and improvement, an imaginary period for the removal of evils, which it would certainly be worth while to wait for, if there was the smallest chance of its ever arriving—a period of unexampled peace and prosperity, when a patriotic king and an enlightened mob united their ardent efforts for the amelioration of human affairs; when the oppressor is as delighted to give up the oppression, as the oppressed is to be liberated from it; when the difficulty and the unpopularity would be to continue the evil, not to abolish it! These are the periods when fair-weather philosophers are willing to venture out and hazard a little for the general good. But the history of human nature is so contrary to all this, that almost all improvements are made after the bitterest resistance, and in the midst of tumults and civil violence—the worst period at which they can be made, compared to which any period is eligible, and should be seized hold of by the friends of salutary reform.

SNAIL'S PACE ARGUMENT.—"*One thing at a time!—Not too fast!—Slow and sure!*—Impor-

tance of the business—extreme difficulty of the business—danger of innovation—need of caution and circumspection—impossibility of foreseeing all consequences—danger of precipitation—every thing should be gradual—one thing at a time—this is not the time—great occupation at present—wait for more leisure—people well satisfied—no petitions presented—no complaints heard—no such mischief has yet taken place—stay till it has taken place! Such is the prattle which the magpie in office, who, understanding nothing, yet understands that he must have something to say on every subject, shouts out among his auditors as a succedaneum to thought."

VAGUE GENERALITIES.—Vague generalities comprehend a numerous class of fallacies resorted to by those who, in preference to the determinate expressions which they might use, adopt others more vague and indeterminate.

Take, for instance, the terms government, laws, morals, religion. Everybody will admit that there are in the world bad governments, bad laws, bad morals, and bad religions. The bare circumstance, therefore, of being engaged in exposing the defects of government, law,

morals, and religion, does not of itself afford the slightest presumption that a writer is engaged in any thing blamable. If his attack be only directed against that which is bad in each, his efforts may be productive of good to any extent. This essential distinction, however, the defender of abuses uniformly takes care to keep out of sight; and boldly imputes to his antagonists an intention to subvert all *government, law, morals, and religion.* Propose any thing with a view to the improvement of the existing practice, in relation to law, government, and religion, he will treat you with an oration upon the necessity and utility of law, government, and religion. Among the several cloudy appellatives which have been commonly employed as cloaks for misgovernment, there is none more conspicuous in this atmosphere of illusion than the word order. As often as any measure is brought forward which has for its object to lessen the sacrifice made by the many to the few, *social order* is the phrase commonly opposed to its progress.

"By a defalcation made from any part of the mass of fictitious delay, vexation, and expense, out of which, and in proportion to which, lawyers' profit is made to flow—by any defalcation made from the

mass of needless and worse than useless emolument to office, with or without service or pretence of service—by any addition endeavored to be made to the quantity, or improvement in the quality of service rendered, or time bestowed in service rendered in return for such emolument—by every endeavor that has for its object the persuading the people to place their fate at the disposal of any other agents than those in whose hands breach of trust is certain, due fulfilment of it morally and physically impossible—*social order* is said to be endangered, and threatened to be destroyed."

In the same way *Establishment* is a word in use to protect the bad parts of establishments, by charging those who wish to remove or alter them, with a wish to subvert all good establishments.

Mischievous fallacies also circulate from the convertible use of what Mr. B. is pleased to call dyslogistic and eulogistic terms. Thus, a vast concern is expressed for the *liberty of the press*, and the utmost abhorrence of its *licentiousness:* but then, by the licentiousness of the press is meant every disclosure by which any abuse is brought to light and exposed to shame—by the *liberty of the press* is meant only publications from which no such inconven-

ience is to be apprehended; and the fallacy consists in employing the sham approbation of liberty as a mask for the real opposition to all free discussion. To write a pamphlet so ill that nobody will read it; to animadvert in terms so weak and insipid upon great evils, that no disgust is excited at the vice, and no apprehension in the evil-doer, is a fair use of the liberty of the press, and is not only pardoned by the friends of government, but draws from them the most fervent eulogium. The licentiousness of the press consists in doing the thing boldly and well, in striking terror into the guilty, and in rousing the attention of the public to the defence of their highest interests. This is the licentiousness of the press held in the greatest horror by timid and corrupt men, and punished by semianimous semicadaverous judges, with a captivity of many years. In the same manner the dyslogistic and eulogistic fallacies are used in the case of reform.

"Between all abuses whatsoever there exists that connection—between all persons who see each of them, any one abuse in which an advantage results to himself, there exists, in point of interest, that close and sufficiently understood connection, of which intimation has been given already. To no

one abuse can correction be administered without endangering the existence of every other.

"If, then, with this inward determination not to suffer, so far as depends upon himself, the adoption of any reform which he is able to prevent, it should seem to him necessary or advisable to put on for a cover the profession or appearance of a desire to contribute to such reform—in pursuance of the device or fallacy here in question, he will represent that which goes by the name of reform as distinguishable into two species; one of them a fit subject for approbation, the other for disapprobation. That which he thus professes to have marked for approbation, he will accordingly for the expression of such approbation, characterize by some adjunct of the *eulogistic* cast, such as moderate, for example, or temperate, or practical, or practicable.

"To the other of these nominally distinct species, he will, at the same time, attach some adjunct of the *dyslogistic* cast, such as violent, intemperate, extravagant, outrageous, theoretical, speculative, and so forth.

"Thus, then, in profession and to appearance, there are in his conception of the matter two distinct and opposite species of reform, to one of which his approbation, to the other his disapprobation, is attached. But the species to which his approbation is attached is an *empty* species—a species

in which no individual is, or is intended to be, contained.

"The species to which his disapprobation is attached is, on the contrary, a crowded species, a receptable in which the whole contents of the *genus* —of the genus *Reform* are intended to be included."

ANTI-RATIONAL FALLACIES.—When reason is in opposition to a man's interests his study will naturally be to render the faculty itself, and whatever issues from it, an object of hatred and contempt. The sarcasm and other figures of speech employed on the occasion are directed not merely against reason but against thought, as if there were something in the faculty of thought that rendered the exercise of it incompatible with useful and successful practice. Sometimes a plan, which would not suit the official person's interest, is without more ado pronounced a *speculative* one; and, by this observation, all need of rational and deliberate discussion is considered to be superseded. The first effort of the corruptionist is to fix the epithet *speculative* upon any scheme which he thinks may cherish the spirit of reform. The expression is hailed with the greatest delight by bad and feeble men, and

repeated with the most unwearied energy; and to the word speculative, by way of reinforcement, are added, *theoretical*, *visionary*, *chimerical*, *romantic*, *Utopian*.

"Sometimes a distinction is taken, and thereupon a concession made. The plan is *good in theory*, but it would be *bad in practice*, *i. e.*, its being good in theory does not hinder its being bad in practice.

"Sometimes, as if in consequence of a farther progress made in the art of irrationality, the plan is pronounced to be *too good to be practicable;* and its being so good as it is, is thus represented as the very cause of its being bad in practice.

"In short, such is the perfection at which this art is at length arrived, that the very circumstance of a plan's being susceptible of the appellation of a *plan*, has been gravely stated as a circumstance sufficient to warrant its being rejected,—rejected, if not with hatred, at any rate with a sort of accompaniment which, to the million, is commonly felt still more galling—with contempt."

There is a propensity to push theory too far; but what is the just inference? not that theoretical propositions (*i. e.*, all propositions of any considerable comprehension or extent) should, from such their extent, be considered to be false *in toto*, but only that, in the particu-

lar case, should inquiry be made whether, supposing the proposition to be in the character of a rule generally true, an exception ought to be taken out of it. It might almost be imagined that there was something wicked or unwise in the exercise of thought; for everybody feels a necessity for disclaiming it. "I am not given to speculation, I am no friend to theories." Can a man disclaim theory, can he disclaim speculation, without disclaiming thought?

The description of persons by whom this fallacy is chiefly employed are those who, regarding a plan as adverse to their interests, and not finding it on the ground of general utility exposed to any preponderant objection, have recourse to this objection in the character of an instrument of contempt, in the view of preventing those from looking into it who might have been otherwise disposed. It is by the fear of seeing it practised that they are drawn to speak of it as impracticable. "Upon the face of it (exclaims some feeble or pensioned gentleman) it carries that air of plausibility, that, if you were not upon your guard, might engage you to bestow more or less attention upon it; but were you to take the

trouble, you would find that (as it is with all these plans which promise so much) practicability would at last be wanting to it. To save yourself from this trouble, the wisest course you can take is to put the plan aside, and to think no more about the matter." This is always accompanied with a peculiar grin of triumph.

The whole of these fallacies may be gathered together in a little oration, which we will denominate the "Noodle's Oration" :—

"What would our ancestors say to this, Sir? How does this measure tally with their institutions? How does it agree with their experience? Are we to put the wisdom of yesterday in competition with the wisdom of centuries? (*Hear! hear!*) Is beardless youth to show no respect for the decisions of mature age? (*Loud cries of hear! hear!*) If this measure be right, would it have escaped the wisdom of those Saxon progenitors to whom we are indebted for so many of our best political institutions? Would the Dane have passed it over? Would the Norman have rejected it? Would such a notable discovery have been reserved for these modern and degenerate times? Besides, Sir, if the measure itself is good, I ask the honor-

able gentleman if this is the time for carrying it into execution—whether, in fact, a more unfortunate period could have been selected than that which he has chosen? If this were an ordinary measure I should not oppose it with so much vehemence; but, Sir, it calls in question the wisdom of an irrevocable law—of a law passed at the memorable period of the Revolution. What right have we, Sir, to break down this firm column on which the great men of that age stamped a character of eternity? Are not all authorities against this measure—Pitt, Fox, Cicero, and the Attorney- and Solicitor-General? The proposition is new, Sir; it is the first time it was ever heard in this House. I am not prepared, Sir,—this House is not prepared,—to receive it. The measure implies a distrust of His Majesty's Government; their disapproval is sufficient to warrant opposition. Precaution only is requisite where danger is apprehended. Here the high character of the individuals in question is a sufficient guarantee against any ground of alarm. Give not, then, your sanction to this measure; for, whatever be its character, if you do give your sanction to it, the same man by whom this is proposed will propose to you others to which it

will be impossible to give your consent. I care very little, Sir, for the ostensible measure; but what is there behind? What are the honorable gentleman's future schemes? If we pass this bill, what fresh concessions may he not require? What further degradation is he planning for his country? Talk of evil and inconvenience, Sir! look to other countries—study other aggregations and societies of men, and then see whether the laws of this country demand a remedy or deserve a panegyric. Was the honorable gentleman (let me ask him) always of this way of thinking? Do I not remember when he was the advocate, in this House, of very opposite opinions? I not only quarrel with his present sentiments, Sir, but I declare very frankly I do not like the party with which he acts. If his own motives were as pure as possible, they cannot but suffer contamination from those with whom he is politically associated. This measure may be a boon to the Constitution, but I will accept no favor to the Constitution from such hands. (*Loud cries of hear! hear!*) I profess myself, Sir, an honest and upright member of the British Parliament, and I am not afraid to profess myself an enemy to all change and all innovation. I am satis-

fied with things as they are; and it will be my pride and pleasure to hand down this country to my children as I received it from those who preceded me. The honorable gentleman pretends to justify the severity with which he has attacked the noble lord who presides in the Court of Chancery. But I say such attacks are pregnant with mischief to government itself. Oppose ministers, you oppose government; disgrace ministers, you disgrace government; bring ministers into contempt, you bring government into contempt; and anarchy and civil war are the consequences. Besides, Sir, the measure is unnecessary. Nobody complains of disorder in that shape in which it is the aim of your measure to propose a remedy to it. The business is one of the greatest importance; there is need of the greatest caution and circumspection. Do not let us be precipitate, Sir; it is impossible to foresee all consequences. Every thing should be gradual; the example of a neighboring nation should fill us with alarm! The honorable gentleman has taxed me with illiberality, Sir; I deny the charge. I hate innovation, but I love improvement. I am an enemy to the corruption of government, but I defend its influence. I dread reform, but I

dread it only when it is intemperate. I consider the liberty of the press as the great palladium of the Constitution; but, at the same time, I hold the licentiousness of the press in the greatest abhorrence. Nobody is more conscious than I am of the splendid abilities of the honorable mover, but I tell him at once his scheme is too good to be practicable. It savors of Utopia. It looks well in theory, but it won't do in practice. It will not do, I repeat, Sir, in practice; and so the advocates of the measure will find, if, unfortunately, it should find its way through Parliament. (*Cheers.*) The source of that corruption to which the honorable member alludes is in the minds of the people; so rank and extensive is that corruption, that no political reform can have any effect in removing it. Instead of reforming others—instead of reforming the State, the Constitution, and every thing that is most excellent, let each man reform himself! let him look at home, he will find there enough to do without looking abroad and aiming at what is out of his power. (*Loud cheers.*) And now, Sir, as it is frequently the custom in this House to end with a quotation, and as the gentleman who preceded me in the debate has anticipated me in my favorite quo-

tation of the 'Strong pull and the long pull,' I shall end with the memorable words of the assembled barons: '*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*' "

"Upon the whole, the following are the characters which appertain in common to all the several arguments here distinguished by the name of fallacies :—

"1. Whatsoever be the measure in hand, they are, with relation to it, irrelevant.

"2. They are all of them such, that the application of these irrelevant arguments affords a presumption either of the weakness or total absence of relevant arguments on the side on which they are employed.

"3. To any good purpose they are all of them unnecessary.

"4. They are all of them not only capable of being applied, but actually in the habit of being applied, and with advantage, to bad purposes, viz.: to the obstruction and defeat of all such measures as have for their object the removal of the abuses or other imperfections still discernible in the frame and practice of the government.

"5. By means of the irrelevancy, they all of them consume and misapply time, thereby obstructing the course and retarding the progress of all necessary and useful business.

" 6. By that irritative quality which, in virtue of their irrelevancy, with the improbity or weakness of which it is indicative, they possess, all of them, in a degree more or less considerable, but in a more particular degree such of them as consist in personalities, are productive of ill-humor, which in some instances has been productive of bloodshed, and is continually productive, as above, of waste of time and hindrance of business.

" 7. On the part of those who, whether in spoken or written discourses, give utterance to them, they are indicative either of improbity or intellectual weakness, or of a contempt for the understanding of those on whose minds they are destined to operate.

" 8. On the part of those on whom they operate, they are indicative of intellectual weakness ; and on the part of those in and by whom they are pretended to operate, they are indicative of improbity, viz., in the shape of insincerity.

" The practical conclusion is, that in proportion as the acceptance, and thence the utterance, of them can be prevented, the understanding of the public will be strengthened, the morals of the public will be purified, and the practice of government improved."

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

BORN 1811, DIED 1863.

NIL NISI BONUM.

By WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

ALMOST the last words which Sir Walter spoke to Lockhart, his biographer, were : "Be a good man, my dear!" and with the last flicker of breath on his dying lips, he sighed a farewell to his family, and passed away blessing them.

Two men, famous, admired, beloved, have just left us, the Goldsmith and the Gibbon of our time.[1] Ere a few weeks are over, many a critic's pen will be at work, reviewing their lives, and passing judgment on their works. This is no review, or history, or criticism ; only a word in testimony of respect and regard for a man of letters, who owes to his own professional labor the honor of becoming acquainted with these two eminent literary men. One was the first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old. He was born

[1] Washington Irving died November 28, 1859; Lord Macaulay died December 28, 1859.

almost with the Republic; the *pater patriæ* had laid his hand on the child's head. He bore Washington's name: he came amongst us bringing the kindest sympathy, the most artless, smiling good-will. His new country (which some people here might be disposed to regard rather superciliously) could send us, as he showed in his own person, a gentleman who, though himself born in no very high sphere, was most finished, polished, easy, witty, quiet; and, socially, the equal of the most refined Europeans. If Irving's welcome in England was a kind one, was it not also gratefully remembered? If he ate our salt, did he not pay us with a thankful heart? Who can calculate the amount of friendliness and good feeling for our country which this writer's generous and untiring regard for us disseminated in his own? His books are read by millions [1] of his countrymen, whom he has taught to love England, and why to love her. It would have been easy to speak otherwise than he did; to inflame national rancors, which, at the time when he first became known as a public writer, war had just renewed; to cry down the old civiliza-

[1] See his life in the most remarkable "Dictionary of Authors," published lately at Philadelphia, by Mr. Allibone.

tion at the expense of the new; to point out our faults, arrogance, shortcomings, and give the Republic to infer how much she was the parent State's superior. There are writers enough in the United States, honest and otherwise, who preach that kind of doctrine. But the good Irving, the peaceful, the friendly, had no place for bitterness in his heart, and no scheme but kindness. Received in England with extraordinary tenderness and friendship (Scott, Southey, Byron, a hundred others have borne witness to their liking for him), he was a messenger of good-will and peace between his country and ours. "See, friends!" he seems to say, "these English are not so wicked, rapacious, callous, proud, as you have been taught to believe them. I went amongst them a humble man; won my way by my pen; and, when known, found every hand held out to me with kindliness and welcome. Scott is a great man, you acknowledge. Did not Scott's King of England give a gold medal to him, and another to me, your countryman, and a stranger?"

Tradition in the United States still fondly retains the history of the feasts and rejoicings which awaited Irving on his return to his native country from Europe. He had a national wel-

come; he stammered in his speeches, hid himself in confusion, and the people loved him all the better. He had worthily represented America in Europe. In that young community a man who brings home with him abundant European testimonials is still treated with respect (I have found American writers, of wide-world reputation, strangely solicitous about the opinions of quite obscure British critics, and elated or depressed by their judgments); and Irving went home medalled by the King, diplomatized by the University, crowned and honored and admired. He had not in any way intrigued for his honors, he had fairly won them; and, in Irving's instance, as in others, the old country was glad and eager to pay them.

In America the love and regard for Irving was a national sentiment. Party wars are perpetually raging there, and are carried on by the press with a rancor and fierceness against individuals which exceed British, almost Irish, virulence. It seemed to me, during a year's travel in the country, as if no one ever aimed a blow at Irving. All men held their hand from that harmless, friendly peacemaker. I had the good fortune to see him at New York, Philadelphia,

Baltimore, and Washington,[1] and remarked how in every place he was honored and welcome. Every large city has its "Irving House." The country takes pride in the fame of its men of letters. The gate of his own charming little domain on the beautiful Hudson River was forever swinging before visitors who came to him. He shut out no one.[2] I had seen many pictures of his house, and read descriptions of it, in both of which it was treated with a not unusual American exaggeration. It was but a pretty little cabin of a place; the gentleman of the press who took notes of the place, whilst his kind old host was sleeping, might have visited the whole house in a couple of minutes.

[1] At Washington, Mr. Irving came to a lecture given by the writer, which Mr. Fillmore and General Pierce, the President and President-elect, were also kind enough to attend together. "Two Kings of Brentford smelling at one rose," says Irving, looking up with his good-humored smile.

[2] Mr. Irving described to me, with that humor and good-humor which he always kept, how, amongst other visitors, a member of the British press, who had carried his distinguished pen to America (where he employed it in villifying his own country), came to Sunnyside, introduced himself to Irving, partook of his wine and luncheon, and in two days described Mr. Irving, his house, his nieces, his meal, and his manner of dozing afterward, in a New York paper. On another occasion, Irving said, laughing: "Two persons came to me, and one held me in conversation whilst the other miscreant took my portrait!"

And how came it that this house was so small, when Mr. Irving's books were sold by hundreds of thousands, nay, millions; when his profits were known to be large, and the habits of life of the good old bachelor were notoriously modest and simple? He had loved once in life. The lady he loved died; and he, whom all the world loved, never sought to replace her. I can't say how much the thought of that fidelity has touched me. Does not the very cheerfulness of his after-life add to the pathos of that untold story? To grieve always was not in his nature; or, when he had his sorrow, to bring all the world in to condole with him and bemoan it. Deep and quiet he lays the love of his heart, and buries it; and grass and flowers grow over the scarred ground in due time.

Irving had such a small house and such narrow rooms, because there was a great number of people to occupy them. He could only afford to keep one old horse (which, lazy and aged as it was, managed once or twice to run away with that careless old horseman). He could only afford to give plain sherry to that amiable British paragraph-monger from New York, who saw the patriarch asleep over his modest, blameless cup, and fetched the public

into his private chamber to look at him. Irving could only live very modestly, because the wifeless, childless man had a number of children to whom he was as a father. He had as many as nine nieces, I am told,—I saw two of these ladies at his house,—with all of whom the dear old man had shared the produce of his labor and genius.

"*Be a good man, my dear!*" One can't but think of these last words of the veteran Chief of Letters, who had tasted and tested the value of worldly success, admiration, prosperity. Was Irving not good, and, of his works, was not his life the best part? In his family, gentle, generous, good-humored, affectionate, self-denying; in society, a delightful example of complete gentlemanhood; quite unspoiled by prosperity; never obsequious to the great (or, worse still, to the base and mean, as some public men are forced to be in his and other countries); eager to acknowledge every contemporary's merit; always kind and affable to the young members of his calling; in his professional bargains and mercantile dealings delicately honest and grateful; one of the most charming masters of our lighter language; the constant friend to us and our nation; to men

of letters doubly dear, not for his wit and genius merely, but as an exemplar of goodness, probity, and pure life. I don't know what sort of testimonial will be raised to him in his own country, where generous and enthusiastic acknowledgment of American merit is never wanting: but Irving was in our service as well as theirs; and as they have placed a stone at Greenwich yonder in memory of that gallant young Bellot, who shared the perils and fate of some of our Arctic seamen, I would like to hear of some memorial raised by English writers and friends of letters in affectionate remembrance of the dear and good Washington Irving.

As for the other writer, whose departure many friends, some few most dearly-loved relatives, and multitudes of admiring readers deplore, our republic has already decreed his statue, and he must have known that he had earned his posthumous honor. He is not a poet and man of letters merely, but citizen, statesman, a great British worthy. Almost from the first moment when he appears, amongst boys, amongst college students, amongst men, he is marked, and takes rank as a great Englishman. All sorts of successes are

easy to him; as a lad he goes down into the arena with others, and wins all the prizes to which he has a mind. A place in the senate is straightway offered to the young man. He takes his seat there; he speaks, when so minded, without party anger or intrigue, but not without party faith and a sort of heroic enthusiasm for his cause. Still he is poet and philosopher even more than orator. That he may have leisure and means to pursue his darling studies, he absents himself for a while, and accepts a richly-remunerative post in the East. As learned a man may live in a cottage or a college common-room; but it always seemed to me that ample means and recognized rank were Macaulay's as of right. Years ago there was a wretched outcry raised because Mr. Macaulay dated a letter from Windsor Castle, where he was staying. Immortal gods! Was this man not a fit guest for any palace in the world? or a fit companion for any man or woman in it? I dare say, after Austerlitz, the old K. K. court officials and footmen sneered at Napoleon for dating from Schönbrunn. But that miserable "Windsor Castle" outcry is an echo out of fast-retreating old-world remembrances. The place of such a natural chief was

amongst the first of the land; and that country is best, according to our British notion at least, where the man of eminence has the best chance of investing his genius and intellect.

If a company of giants were got together, very likely one or two of the mere six-feet-six people might be angry at the incontestable superiority of the very tallest of the party; and so I have heard some London wits, rather peevish at Macaulay's superiority, complain that he occupied too much of the talk, and so forth. Now that wonderful tongue is to speak no more, will not many a man grieve that he no longer has the chance to listen? To remember the talk is to wonder; to think not only of the treasures he had in his memory, but of the trifles he had stored there, and could produce with equal readiness. Almost on the last day I had the fortune to see him, a conversation happened suddenly to spring up about senior wranglers, and what they had done in after-life. To the almost terror of the persons present, Macaulay began with the senior wrangler of 1801–2–3–4, and so on, giving the name of each, and relating his subsequent career and rise. Every man who has known him has his story regarding that astonishing memory. It

may be that he was not ill-pleased that you should recognize it; but to those prodigious intellectual feats, which were so easy to him, who would grudge his tribute of homage? His talk was, in a word, admirable, and we admired it.

Of the notices which have appeared regarding Lord Macaulay, up to the day when the present lines are written (the 9th of January), the reader should not deny himself the pleasure of looking especially at two. It is a good sign of the times when such articles as these (I mean the articles in *The Times* and *Saturday Review*) appear in our public prints about our public men. They educate us, as it were, to admire rightly. An uninstructed person in a museum or at a concert may pass by without recognizing a picture or a passage of music, which the connoisseur by his side may show him is a masterpiece of harmony, or a wonder of artistic skill. After reading these papers, you like and respect more the person you have admired so much already. And so with regard to Macaulay's style there may be faults of course—what critic can't point them out? But for the nonce we are not talking about faults; we want to say *nil nisi bonum*. Well,

take at hazard any three pages of the "Essays" or "History," and, glimmering below the stream of the narrative, as it were, you, an average reader, see one, two, three, a half-score of allusions to other historic facts, characters, literature, poetry, with which you are acquainted. Why is this epithet used? Whence is that simile drawn? How does he manage, in two or three words, to paint an individual, or to indicate a landscape? Your neighbor, who has *his* reading, and his little stock of literature stowed away in his mind, shall detect more points, allusions, happy touches, indicating not only the prodigious memory and vast learning of this master, but the wonderful history, the honest, humble previous toil of this great scholar. He reads twenty books to write a sentence; he travels a hundred miles to make a line of description.

Many Londoners—not all—have seen the British Museum Library. I speak *à cœur ouvert*, and pray the kindly reader to bear with me. I have seen all sorts of domes of Peters and Pauls, Sophia, Pantheon,—what not?—and have been struck by none of them so much as by that catholic dome in Bloomsbury, under which our million volumes are

housed. What peace, what love, what truth, what beauty, what happiness for all, what generous kindness for you and me, are here spread out! It seems to me one cannot sit down in that place without a heart full of grateful reverence. I own to have said my grace at the table, and to have thanked heaven for this my English birthright, freely to partake of these bountiful books, and to speak the truth I find there. Under the dome which held Macaulay's brain, and from which his solemn eyes looked out on the world but a fortnight since, what a vast, brilliant, and wonderful store of learning was ranged! what strange lore would he not fetch for you at your bidding! A volume of law or history, a book of poetry familiar or forgotten (except by himself who forgot nothing), a novel ever so old, and he had it at hand. I spoke to him once about "Clarissa." "Not read 'Clarissa!'" he cried out. "If you have once thoroughly entered on 'Clarissa' and are infected by it, you can't leave it. When I was in India I passed one hot season at the hills, and there were the Governor-General, and the Secretary of Government, and the Commander-in-Chief, and their wives. I had

'Clarissa' with me; and, as soon as they began to read, the whole station was in a passion of excitement about Miss Harlowe and her misfortunes, and her scoundrelly Lovelace! The Governor's wife seized the book, and the Secretary waited for it, and the Chief Justice could not read it for tears!" He acted the whole scene; he paced up and down the "Athenæum" library; I dare say he could have spoken pages of the book—of that book, and of what countless piles of others!

In this little paper let us keep to the text of *nil nisi bonum.* One paper I have read regarding Lord Macaulay says "he had no heart." Why, a man's books may not always speak the truth, but they speak his mind in spite of himself; and it seems to me this man's heart is beating through every page he penned. He is always in a storm of revolt and indignation against wrong, craft, tyranny. How he cheers heroic resistance; how he backs and applauds freedom struggling for its own; how he hates scoundrels, ever so victorious and successful; how he recognizes genius, though selfish villains possess it! The critic who says Macaulay had no heart, might say that Johnson had none; and two more generous, and more lov-

ing, and more hating, and more partial, and more noble, do not live in our history. Those who knew Lord Macaulay knew how admirably tender and generous[1] and affectionate he was. It was not his business to bring his family before the theatre footlights, and call for bouquets from the gallery as he wept over them.

If any young man of letters reads this little sermon—and to him, indeed, it is addressed—I would say to him: "Bear Scott's words in your mind, and '*be good, my dear!*'" Here are two literary men gone to their account, and, *laus Deo*, as far as we know, it is fair, and open, and clean. Here is no need for apologies for shortcomings, or explanations of vices which would have been virtues but for unavoidable etc. Here are two examples of men most differently gifted: each pursuing his calling; each speaking his truth as God bade him; each honest in his life; just and irreproachable in his dealings; dear to his friends; honored by his country; beloved at his fireside. It has been the fortunate lot of both to give incalcu-

[1] Since the above was written, I have been informed that it has been found, on examining Lord Macaulay's papers, that he was in the habit of giving away *more than a fourth part* of his annual income.

lable happiness and delight to the world, which thanks them in return with an immense kindliness, respect, affection. It may not be our chance, brother scribe, to be endowed with such merit, or rewarded with such fame. But the rewards of these men are rewards paid to *our service.* We may not win the bâton or epaulettes; but God give us strength to guard the honor of the flag!

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

BORN 1803—DIED 1882.

COMPENSATION.*

BY RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

EVER since I was a boy, I have wished to write a discourse on Compensation: for it seemed to me when very young, that on this subject life was ahead of theology, and the people knew more than the preachers taught. The documents, too, from which the doctrine is to be drawn, charmed my fancy by their endless variety, and lay always before me, even in sleep; for they are the tools in our hands, the bread in our basket, the transactions of the street, the farm, and the dwelling-house, greetings, relations, debts, and credits, the influence of character, the nature and endowment of all men. It seemed to me, also, that in it might be shown men a ray of divinity, the present action of the soul of this world, clean from all vestige of tradition, and so the heart of man might be bathed by an inundation of eternal

* From Emerson's Essays, first series, through the courtesy of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

love, conversing with that which he knows was always and always must be, because it really is now. It appeared, moreover, that if this doctrine could be stated in terms with any resemblance to those bright intuitions in which this truth is sometimes revealed to us, it would be a star in many dark hours and crooked passages in our journey that would not suffer us to lose our way.

I was lately confirmed in these desires by hearing a sermon at church. The preacher, a man esteemed for his orthodoxy, unfolded in the ordinary manner the doctrine of the Last Judgment. He assumed, that judgment is not executed in this world; that the wicked are successful; that the good are miserable; and then urged from reason and from Scripture a compensation to be made to both parties in the next life. No offence appeared to be taken by the congregation at this doctrine. As far as I could observe, when the meeting broke up, they separated without remark on the sermon.

Yet what was the import of this teaching? What did the preacher mean by saying that the good are miserable in the present life? Was it that houses and lands, offices, wine,

horses, dress, luxury, are had by unprincipled men, whilst the saints are poor and despised; and that a compensation is to be made to these last hereafter, by giving them the like gratifications another day,—bank-stock and doubloons, venison and champagne? This must be the compensation intended; for what else? Is it that they are to have leave to pray and praise? to love and serve men? Why, that they can do now. The legitimate inference the disciple would draw was: "We are to have *such* a good time as the sinners have now"; or, to push it to its extreme import: "You sin now, we shall sin by and by; we would sin now, if we could; not being successful, we expect our revenge to-morrow."

The fallacy lay in the immense concession, that the bad are successful; that justice is not done now. The blindness of the preacher consisted in deferring to the base estimate of the market of what constitutes a manly success instead of confronting and convicting the world from the truth; announcing the presence of the soul; the omnipotence of the will: and so establishing the standard of good and ill, of success and falsehood.

I find a similar base tone in the popular

religious works of the day, and the same doctrines assumed by the literary men when occasionally they treat the related topics. I think that our popular theology has gained in decorum, and not in principle, over the superstitions it has displaced. But men are better than this theology. Their daily life gives it the lie. Every ingenuous and aspiring soul leaves the doctrine behind him in his own experience; and all men feel sometimes the falsehood which they cannot demonstrate. For men are wiser than they know. That which they hear in schools and pulpits without after-thought, if said in conversation, would probably be questioned in silence. If a man dogmatize in a mixed company on Providence and the divine laws, he is answered by a silence which conveys well enough to an observer the dissatisfaction of the hearer, but his incapacity to make his own statement.

I shall attempt in this and the following chapter to record some facts that indicate the path of the law of Compensation; happy beyond my expectation, if I shall truly draw the smallest arc of this circle.

POLARITY, or action and reaction, we meet in every part of nature: in darkness and light;

in heat and cold; in the ebb and flow of waters; in male and female; in the inspiration and expiration of plants and animals; in the equation of quantity and quality in the fluids of the animal body; in the systole and diastole of the heart; in the undulations of fluids, and of sound; in the centrifugal and centripetal gravity; in electricity, galvanism, and chemical affinity. Superinduce magnetism at one end of a needle; the opposite magnetism takes place at the other end. If the south attracts, the north repels. To empty here, you must condense there. An inevitable dualism bisects nature, so that each thing is a half, and suggests another thing to make it whole; as, spirit, matter; man, woman; odd, even; subjective, objective; in, out; upper, under; motion, rest; yea, nay.

Whilst the world is thus dual, so is every one of its parts. The entire system of things gets represented in every particle. There is somewhat that resembles the ebb and flow of the sea, day and night, man and woman, in a single needle of the pine, in a kernel of corn, in each individual of every animal tribe. The reaction, so grand in the elements, is repeated within these small boundaries. For example,

in the animal kingdom the physiologist has observed that no creatures are favorites, but a certain compensation balances every gift and every defect. A surplusage given to one part is paid out of a reduction from another part of the same creature. If the head and neck are enlarged, the trunk and extremities are cut short.

The theory of the mechanic forces is another example. What we gain in power is lost in time; and the converse. The periodic or compensating errors of the planets is another instance. The influences of climate and soil in political history are another. The cold climate invigorates. The barren soil does not breed fevers, crocodiles, tigers, or scorpions.

The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man. Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet has its sour; every evil its good. Every faculty which is a receiver of pleasure has an equal penalty put on its abuse. It is to answer for its moderation with its life. For every grain of wit there is a grain of folly. For every thing you have missed, you have gained something else; and for every thing you gain, you lose something. If riches increase, they are increased

that use them. If the gatherer gathers too much, nature takes out of the man what she puts into his chest, swells the estate, but kills the owner. Nature hates monopolies and exceptions. The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing, than the varieties of condition tend to equalize themselves. There is always some levelling circumstance that puts down the overbearing, the strong, the rich, the fortunate, substantially on the same ground with all others. Is a man too strong and fierce for society, and by temper and position a bad citizen,—a morose ruffian, with a dash of the pirate in him;—nature sends him a troop of pretty sons and daughters, who are getting along in the dame's classes at the village school, and love and fear for them smooth his grim scowl to courtesy. Thus she contrives to intenerate the granite and feldspar, takes the boar out and puts the lamb in, and keeps her balance true.

The farmer imagines power and place are fine things. But the President has paid dear for his White House. It has commonly cost him all his peace, and the best of his manly attributes. To preserve for a short time so conspicuous an appearance before the world, he is

content to eat dust before the real masters who stand erect behind the throne. Or, do men desire the more substantial and permanent grandeur of genius? Neither has this an immunity. He who by force of will or of thought is great, and overlooks thousands, has the charges of that eminence. With every influx of light comes new danger. Has he light? he must bear witness to the light, and always outrun that sympathy which gives him such keen satisfaction, by his fidelity to new revelations of the incessant soul. He must hate father and mother, wife and child. Has he all that the world loves and admires and covets?—he must cast behind him their admiration, and afflict them by faithfulness to his truth, and become a byword and a hissing.

This law writes the laws of cities and nations. It is in vain to build or plot or combine against it. Things refuse to be mismanaged long. *Res nolunt diu male administrari.* Though no checks to a new evil appear, the checks exist and will appear. If the government is cruel, the governor's life is not safe. If you tax too high, the revenue will yield nothing. If you make the criminal code sanguinary, juries will not convict. If the law is too mild, private

vengeance comes in. If the government is a terrific democracy, the pressure is resisted by an overcharge of energy in the citizen, and life glows with a fiercer flame. The true life and satisfactions of man seem to elude the utmost rigors or felicities of condition, and to establish themselves with great indifferency under all varieties of circumstances. Under all governments the influence of character remains the same,—in Turkey and in New England about alike. Under the primeval despots of Egypt, history honestly confesses that man must have been as free as culture could make him.

These appearances indicate the fact that the universe is represented in every one of its particles. Every thing in nature contains all the powers of nature. Every thing is made of one hidden stuff; as the naturalist sees one type under every metamorphosis, and regards a horse as a running man, a fish as a swimming man, a bird as a flying man, a tree as a rooted man. Each new form repeats not only the main character of the type, but part for part all the details, all the aims, furtherances, hindrances, energies, and whole system of every other. Every occupation, trade, art, transaction, is a compend

of the world, and a correlative of every other. Each one is an entire emblem of hnman life; of its good and ill, its trials, its enemies, its course, and its end. And each one must somehow accommodate the whole man, and recite all his destiny.

The world globes itself in a drop of dew. The microscope cannot find the animalcule which is less perfect for being little. Eyes, ears, taste, smell, motion, resistance, appetite, and organs of reproduction that take hold on eternity,—all find room to consist in the small creature. So do we put our life into every act. The true doctrine of omnipresence is, that God reappears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb. The value of the universe contrives to throw itself into every point. If the good is there, so is the evil; if the affinity, so the repulsion; if the force, so the limitation.

Thus is the universe alive. All things are moral. That soul, which within us is a sentiment, outside of us is a law. We feel its inspiration; out there in history we can see its fatal strength. "It is in the world, and the world was made by it." Justice is not postponed. A perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life. *Οἱ κύβοι Διὸς ἀεὶ εὐπίπτουσι,*

—The dice of God are always loaded. The world looks like a multiplication-table, or a mathematical equation, which, turn it how you will, balances itself. Take what figure you will, its exact value, nor more nor less, still returns to you. Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears wherever a part appears. If you see smoke there must be fire. If you see a hand or a limb, you know that the trunk to which it belongs is there behind.

Every act rewards itself, or, in other words, integrates itself, in a twofold manner: first, in the thing, or in real nature; and secondly, in the circumstance, or in apparent nature. Men call the circumstance the retribution. The causal retribution is in the thing, and is seen by the soul. The retribution in the circumstance is seen by the understanding; it is inseparable from the thing, but is often spread over a long time, and so does not become distinct until after many years. The specific stripes may follow late after the offence, but they follow because they accompany it. Crime and punishment grow out of one stem. Punishment is a

fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it. Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blooms in the cause, the end preëxists in the means, the fruit in the seed.

Whilst thus the world will be whole, and refuses to be disparted, we seek to act partially, to sunder, to appropriate; for example,—to gratify the senses, we sever the pleasure of the senses from the needs of the character. The ingenuity of man has always been dedicated to the solution of one problem,—how to detach the sensual sweet, the sensual strong, the sensual bright, etc., from the moral sweet, the moral deep, the moral fair; that is, again, to contrive to cut clean off this upper surface so thin as to leave it bottomless; to get a *one end*, without an *other end*. The soul says, Eat; the body would feast. The soul says, The man and woman shall be one flesh and one soul; the body would join the flesh only. The soul says, Have dominion over all things to the ends of virtue; the body would have the power over things to its own ends.

The soul strives amain to live and work through all things. It would be the only fact.

All things shall be added unto it,—power, pleasure, knowledge, beauty. The particular man aims to be somebody; to set up for himself; to truck and higgle for a private good; and, in particulars, to ride, that he may ride; to dress, that he may be dressed; to eat, that he may eat; and to govern, that he may be seen. Men seek to be great; they would have offices, wealth, power, and fame. They think that to be great is to possess one side of nature,—the sweet,—without the other side,—the bitter.

This dividing and detaching is steadily counteracted. Up to this day, it must be owned, no projector has had the smallest success. The parted water reunites behind our hand. Pleasure is taken out of pleasant things, profit out of profitable things, power out of strong things, as soon as we seek to separate them from the whole. We can no more halve things and get the sensual good, by itself, than we can get an inside that shall have no outside, or a light without a shadow. "Drive out nature with a fork, she comes running back."

Life invests itself with inevitable conditions, which the unwise seek to dodge, which one and another brags that he does not know; that

they do not touch him;—but the brag is on his lips, the conditions are in his soul. If he escapes them in one part, they attack him in another more vital part. If he has escaped them in form and in the appearance, it is because he has resisted his life, and fled from himself, and the retribution is so much death. So signal is the failure of all attempts to make this separation of the good from the tax, that the experiment would not be tried,—since to try it is to be mad,—but for the circumstance, that when the disease began in the will, of rebellion and separation, the intellect is at once infected, so that the man ceases to see God whole in each object, but is able to see the sensual allurement of an object, and not see the sensual hurt; he sees the mermaid's head, but not the dragon's tail; and thinks he can cut off that which he would have, from that which he would not have. "How secret art thou who dwellest in the highest heavens in silence, O thou only great God, sprinkling with an unwearied Providence certain penal blindnesses upon such as have unbridled desires!"[1]

The human soul is true to these facts in the painting of fable, of history, of law, of proverbs,

[1] St. Augustine, "Confessions," B. I.

of conversation. It finds a tongue in literature unawares. Thus the Greeks called Jupiter, Supreme Mind; but having traditionally ascribed to him many base actions, they involuntarily made amends to reason, by tying up the hands of so bad a god. He is made as helpless as a king of England. Prometheus knows one secret which Jove must bargain for; Minerva, another. He cannot get his own thunders; Minerva keeps the key of them.

> "Of all the gods, I only know the keys
> That ope the solid doors within whose vaults
> His thunders sleep."

A plain confession of the in-working of the All, and of its moral aim. The Indian mythology ends in the same ethics; and it would seem impossible for any fable to be invented and get any currency which was not moral. Aurora forgot to ask youth for her lover, and though Tithonus is immortal, he is old. Achilles is not quite invulnerable; the sacred waters did not wash the heel by which Thetis held him. Siegfried, in the Nibelungen, is not quite immortal, for a leaf fell on his back whilst he was bathing in the dragon's blood, and that spot which it covered is mortal. And so it must be. There is a crack in every thing God has made.

It would seem, there is always this vindictive circumstance stealing in at unawares, even into the wild poesy in which the human fancy attempted to make bold holiday, and to shake itself free of the old laws,—this back-stroke, this kick of the gun, certifying that the law is fatal; that in nature nothing can be given, all things are sold.

This is that ancient doctrine of Nemesis, who keeps watch in the universe, and lets no offence go unchastised. The Furies, they said, are attendants on justice, and if the sun in heaven should transgress his path, they would punish him. The poets related that stone walls, and iron swords, and leathern thongs had an occult sympathy with the wrongs of their owners; that the belt which Ajax gave Hector dragged the Trojan hero over the field at the wheels of the car of Achilles, and the sword which Hector gave Ajax was that on whose point Ajax fell. They recorded, that when the Thasians erected a statue to Theagenes, a victor in the games, one of his rivals went to it by night, and endeavored to throw it down by repeated blows, until at last he moved it from its pedestal, and was crushed to death beneath its fall.

This voice of fable has in it somewhat divine. It came from thought above the will of the writer. That is the best part of each writer, which has nothing private in it; that which he does not know; that which flowed out of his constitution, and not from his too active invention; that which in the study of a single artist you might not easily find, but in the study of many, you would abstract as the spirit of them all. Phidias it is not, but the work of man in that early Hellenic world, that I would know. The name and circumstance of Phidias, however convenient for history, embarrass when we come to the highest criticism. We are to see that which man was tending to do in a given period, and was hindered, or, if you will, modified in doing, by the interfering volitions of Phidias, of Dante, of Shakespeare, the organ whereby man at the moment wrought.

Still more striking is the expression of this fact in the proverbs of all nations, which are always the literature of reason, or the statements of an absolute truth, without qualification. Proverbs, like the sacred books of each nation, are the sanctuary of the intuitions. That which the droning world, chained to appearances, will not allow the realist to say in

his own words, it will suffer him to say in proverbs without contradiction. And this law of laws which the pulpit, the senate, and the college deny, is hourly preached in all markets and workshops by flights of proverbs, whose teaching is as true and as omnipresent as that of birds and flies.

All things are double, one against another. —Tit for tat; an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; measure for measure; love for love.—Give and it shall be given you. —He that watereth shall be watered himself. —What will you have? quoth God; pay for it and take it.—Nothing venture, nothing have. —Thou shalt be paid exactly for what thou hast done, no more, no less.—Who doth not work shall not eat.—Harm watch, harm catch. —Curses always recoil on the head of him who imprecates them.—If you put a chain around the neck of a slave, the other end fastens itself around your own.—Bad counsel confounds the adviser.—The Devil is an ass.

It is thus written, because it is thus in life. Our action is overmastered and characterized above our will by the law of nature. We aim at a petty end quite aside from the public good, but our act arranges itself by irresistible

magnetism in a line with the poles of the world.

A man cannot speak but he judges himself. With his will, or against his will, he draws his portrait to the eye of his companions by every word. Every opinion reacts on him who utters it. It is a thread-ball thrown at a mark, but the other end remains in the thrower's bag. Or, rather, it is a harpoon hurled at the whale, unwinding, as it flies, a coil of cord in the boat, and if the harpoon is not good, or not well thrown, it will go nigh to cut the steersman in twain, or to sink the boat.

You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong. "No man had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to him," said Burke. The exclusive in fashionable life does not see that he excludes himself from enjoyment, in the attempt to appropriate it. The exclusionist in religion does not see that he shuts the door of heaven on himself, in striving to shut out others. Treat men as pawns and ninepins, and you shall suffer as well as they. If you leave out their heart, you shall lose your own. The senses would make things of all persons; of women, of children, of the poor. The vulgar proverb, "I will get it from his purse or get it from his skin," is sound philosophy.

All infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by fear. Whilst I stand in simple relations to my fellow-man, I have no displeasure in meeting him. We meet as water meets water, or as two currents of air mix, with perfect diffusion and interpenetration of nature. But as soon as there is any departure from simplicity, and attempt at halfness, or good for me that is not good for him, my neighbor feels the wrong; he shrinks from me as far as I have shrunk from him; his eyes no longer seek mine; there is war between us; there is hate in him and fear in me.

All the old abuses in society, universal and particular, all unjust accumulations of property and power, are avenged in the same manner. Fear is an instructor of great sagacity, and the herald of all revolutions. One thing he teaches, that there is rottenness where he appears. He is a carrion crow, and though you see not well what he hovers for, there is death somewhere. Our property is timid, our laws are timid, our cultivated classes are timid. Fear for ages has boded and mowed and gibbered over government and property. That obscene bird is not there for nothing. He indicates great wrongs which must be revised.

Of the like nature is that expectation of change which instantly follows the suspension of our voluntary activity. The terror of cloudless noon, the emerald of Polycrates, the awe of prosperity, the instinct which leads every generous soul to impose on itself tasks of a noble asceticism and vicarious virtue, are the tremblings of the balance of justice through the heart and mind of man.

Experienced men of the world know very well that it is best to pay scot and lot as they go along, and that a man often pays dear for a small frugality. The borrower runs in his own debt. Has a man gained any thing who has received a hundred favors and rendered none? Has he gained by borrowing, through indolence or cunning, his neighbor's wares, or horses or money? There arises on the deed the instant acknowledgment of benefit on the one part, and of debt on the other; that is, of superiority and inferiority. The transaction remains in the memory of himself and his neighbor; and every new transaction alters, according to its nature, their relation to each other. He may soon come to see that he had better have broken his own bones than to have ridden in his neighbor's coach, and that "the

highest price he can pay for a thing is to ask for it."

A wise man will extend this lesson to all parts of life, and know that it is the part of prudence to face every claimant, and pay every just demand on your time, your talents, or your heart. Always pay; for, first or last, you must pay your entire debt. Persons and events may stand for a time between you and justice, but it is only a postponement. You must pay at last your own debt. If you are wise, you will dread a prosperity which only loads you with more. Benefit is the end of nature. But for every benefit which you receive, a tax is levied. He is great who confers the most benefits. He is base—and that is the one base thing in the universe—to receive favors and render none. In the order of nature we cannot render benefits to those from whom we receive them, or only seldom. But the benefit we receive must be rendered again, line for line, deed for deed, cent for cent, to somebody. Beware of too much good staying in your hand. It will fast corrupt and worm worms. Pay it away quickly in some sort.

Labor is watched over by the same pitiless

laws. Cheapest, say the prudent, is the dearest labor. What we buy in a broom, a mat, a wagon, a knife, is some application of good-sense to a common want. It is best to pay in your land a skilful gardener, or to buy good-sense applied to gardening; in your sailor, good-sense applied to navigation; in the house, good-sense applied to cooking, sewing, serving; in your agent, good-sense applied to accounts and affairs. So do you multiply your presence, or spread yourself throughout your estate. But because of the dual constitution of things, in labor as in life there can be no cheating. The thief steals from himself. The swindler swindles himself. For the real price of labor is knowledge and virtue, whereof wealth and credit are signs. These signs, like paper-money, may be counterfeited or stolen, but that which they represent, namely, knowledge and virtue, cannot be counterfeited or stolen. These ends of labor cannot be answered but by real exertions of the mind, and in obedience to pure motives. The cheat, the defaulter, the gambler, cannot extort the knowledge of material and moral nature which his honest care and pains yield to the operative. The law of nature is, Do the thing, and

you shall have the power: but they who do not the thing have not the power.

Human labor, through all its forms, from the sharpening of a stake to the construction of a city or an epic, is one immense illustration of the perfect compensation of the universe. The absolute balance of Give and Take, the doctrine that every thing has its price,—and if that price is not paid, not that thing but something else is obtained, and that it is impossible to get any thing without its price,—is not less sublime in the columns of a ledger than in the budgets of states, in the laws of light and darkness, in all the action and reaction of nature. I cannot doubt that the high laws which each man sees implicated in those processes with which he is conversant,—the stern ethics which sparkle on his chisel-edge, which are measured out by his plumb and foot-rule, which stand as manifest in the footing of the shop-bill as in the history of a state,—do recommend to him his trade, and though seldom named, exalt his business to his imagination.

The league between virtue and nature engages all things to assume a hostile front to vice. The beautiful laws and substances of

the world persecute and whip the traitor. He finds that things are arranged for truth and benefit, but there is no den in the wide world to hide a rogue. Commit a crime, and the earth is made of glass. Commit a crime, and it seems as if a coat of snow fell on the ground, such as reveals in the woods the track of every partridge and fox and squirrel and mole. You cannot recall the spoken word, you cannot wipe out the foot-track, you cannot draw up the ladder, so as to leave no inlet or clue. Some damning circumstance always transpires. The laws and substances of nature—water, snow, wind, gravitation—become penalties to the thief.

On the other hand, the law holds with equal sureness for all right action. Love, and you shall be loved. All love is mathematically just, as much as the two sides of an algebraic equation. The good man has absolute good, which like fire turns every thing to its own nature, so that you cannot do him any harm; but as the royal armies sent against Napoleon, when he approached, cast down their colors and from enemies became friends, so disasters of all kinds, as sickness, offence, poverty, prove benefactors:—

> "Winds blow and waters roll
> Strength to the brave, and power and deity,
> Yet in themselves are nothing."

The good are befriended even by weakness and defect. As no man had ever a point of pride that was not injurious to him, so no man had ever a defect that was not somewhere made useful to him. The stag in the fable admired his horns and blamed his feet, but when the hunter came, his feet saved him, and afterward, caught in the thicket, his horns destroyed him. Every man in his lifetime needs to thank his faults. As no man thoroughly understands a truth until he has contended against it, so no man has a thorough acquaintance with the hindrances or talents of men, until he has suffered from the one, and seen the triumph of the other over his own want of the same. Has he a defect of temper that unfits him to live in society? Thereby he is driven to entertain himself alone, and acquire habits of self-help; and thus, like the wounded oyster, he mends his shell with pearl.

Our strength grows out of our weakness. The indignation which arms itself with secret forces does not awaken until we are pricked and stung and sorely assailed. A great man

is always willing to be little. Whilst he sits on the cushion of advantages, he goes to sleep. When he is pushed, tormented, defeated, he has a chance to learn something; he has been put on his wits, on his manhood; he has gained facts; learns his ignorance; is cured of the insanity of conceit; has got moderation and real skill. The wise man throws himself on the side of his assailants. It is more his interest than it is theirs to find his weak point. The wound cicatrizes and falls off from him like a dead skin, and when they would triumph, lo! he has passed on invulnerable. Blame is safer than praise. I hate to be defended in a newspaper. As long as all that is said is said against me, I feel a certain assurance of success. But as soon as honeyed words of praise are spoken for me, I feel as one that lies unprotected before his enemies. In general, every evil to which we do not succumb is a benefactor. As the Sandwich Islander believes that the strength and valor of the enemy he kills passes into himself, so we gain the strength of the temptation we resist.

The same guards which protect us from disaster, defect, and enmity, defend us, if we will, from selfishness and fraud. Bolts and bars are

not the best of our institutions, nor is shrewdness in trade a mark of wisdom. Men suffer all their life long, under the foolish superstition that they can be cheated. But it is as impossible for a man to be cheated by any one but himself, as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time. There is a third silent party to all our bargains. The nature and soul of things takes on itself the guaranty of the fulfilment of every contract, so that honest service cannot come to loss. If you serve an ungrateful master, serve him the more. Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withholden, the better for you; for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer.

The history of persecution is a history of endeavors to cheat nature, to make water run up hill, to twist a rope of sand. It makes no difference whether the actors be many or one, a tyrant or a mob. A mob is a society of bodies voluntarily bereaving themselves of reason, and traversing its work. The mob is man voluntarily descending to the nature of the beast. Its fit hour of activity is night. Its actions are insane like its whole constitution. It perse-

cutes a principle; it would whip a right; it would tar and feather justice, by inflicting fire and outrage upon the houses and persons of those who have these. It resembles the prank of boys, who run with fire-engines to put out the ruddy aurora streaming to the stars. The inviolate spirit turns their spite against the wrong-doers. The martyr cannot be dishonored. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison, a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. Hours of sanity and consideration are always arriving to communities, as to individuals, when the truth is seen, and the martyrs are justified.

Thus do all things preach the indifferency of circumstances. The man is all. Every thing has two sides, a good and an evil. Every advantage has its tax. I learn to be content. But the doctrine of compensation is not the doctrine of indifferency. The thoughtless say on hearing these representations: "What boots it to do well? there is one event to good and evil; if I gain any good I must pay for it; if I

lose any good, I gain some other; all actions are indifferent."

There is a deeper fact in the soul than compensation—to wit, its own nature. The soul is not a compensation, but a life. The soul *is*. Under all this running sea of circumstance, whose waters ebb and flow with perfect balance, lies the aboriginal abyss of real Being. Essence, or God, is not a relation, or a part, but the whole. Being is the vast affirmative, excluding negation, self-balanced, and swallowing up all relations, parts, and times within itself. Nature, truth, virtue, are the influx from thence. Vice is the absence or departure of the same. Nothing, Falsehood, may indeed stand as the great Night or shade, on which, as a background, the living universe paints itself forth; but no fact is begotten by it; it cannot work, for it is not. It cannot work any good; it cannot work any harm. It is harm, inasmuch as it is worse not to be than to be.

We feel defrauded of the retribution due to evil acts, because the criminal adheres to his vice and contumacy, and does not come to a crisis or judgment anywhere in visible nature. There is no stunning confutation of his nonsense before men and angels. Has he there-

fore outwitted the law? Inasmuch as he carries the malignity and the lie with him, he so far deceases from nature. In some manner there will be a demonstration of the wrong to the understanding also; but should we not see it, this deadly deduction makes square the eternal account.

Neither can it be said, on the other hand, that the gain of rectitude must be bought by any loss. There is no penalty to virtue; no penalty to wisdom: they are proper additions of being. In a virtuous action, I properly *am;* in a virtuous act, I add to the world; I plant into deserts conquered from Chaos and Nothing, and see the darkness receding on the limits of the horizon. There can be no excess to love; none to knowledge; none to beauty, when these attributes are considered in the purest sense. The soul refuses limits, and always affirms an Optimism, never a Pessimism.

Man's life is a progress, and not a station. His instinct is trust. Our instinct uses "more" and "less" in application to man, of the *presence of the soul*, and not of its absence; the brave man is greater than the coward; the true, the benevolent, the wise, is more a man, and not less, than the fool and knave. There

is no tax on the good of virtue ; for that is the incoming of God himself, or absolute existence, without any comparative. Material good has its tax, and if it came without desert or sweat, has no root in me, and the next wind will blow it away. But all the good of nature is the soul's, and may be had, if paid for in nature's lawful coin—that is, by labor which the heart and the head allow. I no longer wish to meet a good I do not earn, for example, to find a pot of buried gold, knowing that it brings with it new burdens. I do not wish more external goods,—neither possessions, nor honors, nor powers, nor persons. The gain is apparent ; the tax is certain. But there is no tax on the knowledge that the compensation exists, and that it is not desirable to dig up treasure. Herein I rejoice with a serene, eternal peace. I contract the boundaries of possible mischief. I learn the wisdom of St. Bernard : " Nothing can work me damage except myself ; the harm that I sustain I carry about with me, and never am a real sufferer but by my own fault."

In the nature of the soul is the compensation for the inequalities of condition. The radical tragedy of nature seems to be the distinction of More and Less. How can Less not feel the

pain; how not feel indignation or malevolence toward More? Look at those who have less faculty, and one feels sad, and knows not well what to make of it. He almost shuns their eye; he fears they will upbraid God. What should they do? It seems a great injustice. But see the facts nearly, and these mountainous inequalities vanish. Love reduces them, as the sun melts the iceberg in the sea. The heart and soul of all men being one, this bitterness of *His* and *Mine* ceases. His is mine. I am my brother, and my brother is me. If I feel overshadowed and outdone by great neighbors, I can yet love; I can still receive; and he that loveth maketh his own the grandeur he loves. Thereby I make the discovery that my brother is my guardian, acting for me with the friendliest designs, and the estate I so admired and envied is my own. It is the nature of the soul to appropriate all things. Jesus and Shakespeare are fragments of the soul, and by love I conquer and incorporate them in my own conscious domain. His virtue,—is not that mine? His wit,—if it cannot be made mine, it is not wit.

Such, also, is the natural history of calamity. The changes which break up at short intervals

the prosperity of men are advertisements of a nature whose law is growth. Every soul is by this intrinsic necessity quitting its whole system of things, its friends, and home, and laws, and faith, as the shell-fish crawls out of its beautiful but stony case, because it no longer admits of its growth, and slowly forms a new house. In proportion to the vigor of the individual, these revolutions are frequent, until in some happier mind they are incessant, and all worldly relations hang very loosely about him, becoming, as it were, a transparent fluid membrane through which the living form is seen, and not, as in most men, an indurated heterogeneous fabric of many dates, and of no settled character, in which the man is imprisoned. Then there can be enlargement, and the man of to-day scarcely recognizes the man of yesterday. And such should be the outward biography of man in time, a putting off of dead circumstances day by day, as he renews his raiment day by day. But to us, in our lapsed estate, resting, not advancing, resisting, not co-operating with the divine expansion, this growth comes by shocks.

We cannot part with our friends. We cannot let our angels go. We do not see that

they only go out, that archangels may come in. We are idolaters of the old. We do not believe in the riches of the soul, in its proper eternity and omnipresence. We do not believe there is any force in to-day to rival or re-create that beautiful yesterday. We linger in the ruins of the old tent, where once we had bread and shelter and organs, nor believe that the spirit can feed, cover, and nerve us again. We cannot again find aught so dear, so sweet, so graceful. But we sit and weep in vain. The voice of the Almighty saith: "Up and onward for evermore!" We cannot stay amid the ruins. Neither will we rely on the new; and so we walk ever with reverted eyes, like those monsters who look backward.

And yet the compensations of calamity are made apparent to the understanding also, after long intervals of time. A fever, a mutilation, a cruel disappointment, a loss of wealth, a loss of friends, seems at the moment unpaid loss, and unpayable. But the sure years reveal the deep remedial force that underlies all facts. The death of a dear friend, wife, brother, lover, which seemed nothing but privation, somewhat later assumes the aspect of a guide or genius; for it commonly operates revolutions in our

way of life, terminates an epoch of infancy or of youth which was waiting to be closed, breaks up a wonted occupation, or a household, or style of living, and allows the formation of new ones more friendly to the growth of character. It permits or constrains the formation of new acquaintances, and the reception of new influences that prove of the first importance to the next years; and the man or woman who would have remained a sunny garden-flower, with no room for its roots and too much sunshine for its head, by the falling of the walls and the neglect of the gardener, is made the banian of the forest, yielding shade and fruit to wide neighborhoods of men.

MATTHEW ARNOLD,

BORN 1822.

SWEETNESS AND LIGHT.

By MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begottten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this *culture*, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which may lie a real ambiguity; and such a motive the word *curiosity* gives us.

I have before now pointed out that we English do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense. With

us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense. A liberal and intelligent eagerness about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, M. Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it in my judgment was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word *curiosity*, thinking enough was said to stamp M. Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that M. Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are—which is,

in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are, implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained without fruitful effort, and which is the very opposite of the blind and diseased impulse of mind which is what we mean to blame when we blame curiosity. Montesquieu says: "The first motive which ought to impel us to study is the desire to augment the excellence of our nature, and to render an intelligent being yet more intelligent." This is the true ground to assign for the genuine scientific passion, however manifested, and for culture, viewed simply as a fruit of this passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term *curiosity* stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbor, the impulses toward action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and hap-

pier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is *a study of perfection.* It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent," so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson: "To make reason and the will of God prevail."

Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking and it wants to be beginning to act; and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific

passion, as well as by the passion of doing good; that it demands worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them. And knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and stable which are not based on reason and the will of God, it is not so bent on acting and instituting, even with the great aim of diminishing human error and misery ever before its thoughts, but that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and to institute.

This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardor, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have long lived and moved now lifting up, and are not new lights finding free passage to shine in upon us? For a long time there was no passage for them to make their way in upon us, and then it was of no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason

and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine—social, political, religious—has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow any thing but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should underrate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized,

the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavor to see things as they are, to draw toward a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,—to learn, in short, the will of God,—the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavor to *see* and *learn* this, but as the endeavor, also, to make it *prevail*, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavor to see and learn the truth for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself and not only in its caricature and degeneration. But perhaps it has got stamped with blame, and disparaged with the dubious title of curiosity, because in comparison with this wider endeavor of such great and plain utility it looks selfish, petty, and unprofitable.

And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself,—religion, that voice of the deepest human experi-

ence,—does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail; but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture—seeking the determination of this question through all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, of art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as of religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution—likewise reaches. Religion says: *The kingdom of God is within you;* and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an *internal* condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever-increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: "It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an in-

dispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion.

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest, or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march toward perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. And here, once more, culture lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness."

But, finally, perfection—as culture from a thorough disinterested study of human nature

and human experience learns to conceive it—is an harmonious expansion of *all* the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here culture goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and many other Liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly important in our modern world, of which the whole civilization is, to a much greater degree than the civilization of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilization tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent de-

gree. Indeed, nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a *general* expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." Above all, the idea of perfection as an *harmonious* expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, in our inaptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country. Its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they per-

severe. And meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, ought to be made quite clear for every one to see, who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are, even, religious organizations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have before now noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainsayers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of

noticing it. "May not every man in England say what he likes?"—Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the study of perfection, are not satisfied, unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying,—has good in it, and more good than bad. In the same way the *Times*, replying to some foreign strictures on the dress, looks, and behavior of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that.

And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal. Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an

end of the greatness of England. But what *is* greatness?—culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind,—would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness,—the England of the last twenty years, or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed? Well, then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed,—the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard

wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe any thing more firmly, than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich. Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines. Culture says: "Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts

which make the furniture of their minds: would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?" And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarized, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigor, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery; yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, one has heard people, fresh from reading certain articles of the *Times* on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of our large English families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them; as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right!

But bodily health and vigor, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we disjoin them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake, and as ends in themselves, our worship of them becomes as mere worship of machinery, as our worship of wealth or population, and as unintelligent and vulgarizing a worship as that is. Every one with any thing like an adequate idea of human perfection has distinctly marked this subordination to higher and spiritual ends of the cultivation of bodily vigor and activity. "Bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things," says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly: "Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, *in reference to the services of the mind.*" But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assign to

it, a special and limited character,—this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus: "It is a sign of ἀφυΐα," says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—"to give yourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern." This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek word εὐφυΐα, a finely-tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to perceive it: an harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things,"—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his "Battle of the Books," "the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*." The εὐφυής is the man who tends toward sweetness and light; the ἀφυής, on the other hand, is our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the

essential character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. Far more than on our freedom, our population, and our industrialism, many amongst us rely upon our religious organizations to save us. I have called religion a yet more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side,—which is the dominant idea of religion,—has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other.

The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was—as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own—a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection so present and paramount. It is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only, the moral fibre must be braced too. And we, because we have braced the moral fibre, are not on that account in the right way, if at the same time the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection is wanting or misapprehended amongst us; and evidently it *is* wanting or misapprehended at present. And when we rely as we do on our religious organizations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea,

and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follow the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction,—the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has. For no people in the world has the command to *resist the devil*, to *overcome the wicked one*, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts toward perfection have

brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organizations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies them in abundance with this grand language. And very freely do they use it; yet it is really the severest possible criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organizations.

The impulse of the English race toward moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism. Nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organization of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the *Nonconformist*, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant Religion." There are sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find lan-

guage to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection, supplies language to judge it, language, too, which is in our mouths every day. "Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling," says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal: "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant Religion!" And religious organizations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organization which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organizations they have no ear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these or-

ganizations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to an harmonious perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organizations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail. They have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense. They have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable. And they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all its sides, remains the true ideal of perfection still; just as the Puritan's ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate, although for what he did well he has been richly rewarded, Notwithstanding the mighty results of the Pilgrim

Fathers' voyage, they and their standard of perfection are rightly judged when we figure to ourselves Shakespeare or Virgil,—souls in whom sweetness and light, and all that in human nature is most humane, were eminent, accompanying them on their voyage, and think what intolerable company Shakespeare and Virgil would have found them! In the same way let us judge the religious organizations which we see all around us. Do not let us deny the good and the happiness which they have accomplished; but do not let us fail to see clearly that their idea of human perfection is narrow and inadequate, and that the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion will never bring humanity to its true goal. As I said with regard to wealth: Let us look at the life of those who live in and for it,—so I say with regard to the religious organizations. Look at the life imaged in such a newspaper as the *Nonconformist*, —a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes, tea-meetings, openings of chapels, sermons; and then think of it as an ideal of a human life completing itself on all sides, and aspiring with all its organs after sweetness, light, and perfection!

Another newspaper, representing, like the *Nonconformist*, one of the religious organizations of this country, was a short time ago giving an account of the crowd at Epsom on the Derby day, and of all the vice and hideousness which were to be seen in that crowd; and then the writer turned suddenly round upon Professor Huxley, and asked him how he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question: And how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organization as you yourself image it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organizations,—expressing, as I have said, the most wide-spread effort which the human race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not

how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organization or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publicè egestas, privatim opulentia*,—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph!* I say that when our religious organizations,—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides

and forces of human nature which we might turn to great use; whether it would not be more operative if it were more complete. And I say that the English reliance on our religious organizations and on their ideas of human perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth,—mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onward to a more complete, an harmonious perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude toward all this machinery, even while it insists that it *is* machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a political organization, or whether it is a religious organization,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organization, or to games and athletic

exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it; and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose.

Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement toward wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the neces-

sity of the movement toward fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for the most part, the stout main body of Philistinism,—are sacrificed to it. In the same way, the result of all the games and sports which occupy the passing generation of boys and young men may be the establishment of a better and sounder physical type for the future to work with. Culture does not set itself against the games and sports; it congratulates the future, and hopes it will make a good use of its improved physical basis; but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was perhaps necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race, Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of Puritans and Nonconformists have been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech may be necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the

Daily Telegraph in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government may be necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults: and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth :— the truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection. When I insist on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against hideousness and rawness, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried our main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world ; but we have told silently upon the mind

of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr. Newman's "Apology" may see, against what in one word may be called "Liberalism." Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it was necessary, it was inevitable that it should prevail. The Oxford movement was broken, it failed; our wrecks are scattered on every shore:—

Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics; in the social sphere, free trade, unrestricted competition, and the making of large industrial fortunes; in the religious sphere, the Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. I do not say that other and more intelli-

gent forces than this were not opposed to the Oxford movement: but this was the force which really beat it; this was the force which Dr. Newman felt himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class industrialists, nor the Dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say

is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movements, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism,—who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has mined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession? It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wish-

ing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-class liberalism, than from clear tendencies which it has itself yet developed. But meanwhile it has plenty of well-intentioned friends against whom culture may with advantage continue to uphold steadily its ideal of human perfection; that this is *an inward spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy.* Mr. Bright, who has a foot in both worlds, the world of middle-class liberalism and the world of democracy, but who brings most of his ideas from the world of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise"; he leads his disciples to believe—what the Englishman is always too ready to believe—that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large muscles, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the

democracy—"the men," as he calls them, "upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests"—he cries out to them: "See what you have done! I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the railroads you have made, the manufactures you have produced, the cargoes which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labors what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden; I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world." Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck and Mr. Lowe debauch the minds of the middle classes, and make such Philistines of them. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he *is*, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the tabernacle he has built. Only the middle classes are told they have done it all with their energy, self-reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and sinews. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is

merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the "Journeyman Engineer," will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection—an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy—is an idea which the new democracy needs far more than the idea of the blessedness of the franchise, or the wonderfulness of its own industrial performances.

Other well-meaning friends of this new power are for leading it, not in the old ruts of middle-class Philistinism, but in ways which are naturally alluring to the feet of democracy, though in this country they are novel and untried ways. I may call them the ways of Jacobinism. Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new

doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of Jacobinism. Mr. Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte—one of them Mr. Congreve, is an old acquaintance of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character—are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. Mr. Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture, and from a natural enough motive; for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism,—its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the bent of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets toward new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrowness and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole

current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race.

The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, will have us observe that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully at that time toward a new worship of this kind, and away from the old run of Latin and Sabine religious ideas. In a similar way culture directs our attention to the natural current there is in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us rivet our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see, not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of an increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so doing.

I remember when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of sanity and clear sense, a man the most considerable, it seems to me, whom

America has yet produced,—Benjamin Franklin,—I remember the relief with which, after long feeling the sway of Franklin's imperturbable common-sense, I came upon a project of his for a new version of the Book of Job, to replace the old version, the style of which, says Franklin, has become obsolete, and thence less agreeable. "I give," he continues, "a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend." We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: "Then Satan answered the Lord and said: 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'" Franklin makes this: "Does Your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" I well remember how when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good-sense!" So, after hearing Bentham cried loudly up as the renovator of modern society, and Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the "Dentology." There I read: "While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking

wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience." From the moment of reading that I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer. I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for supplying the rule of human society, for perfection.

Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle, or Mr. Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text: "Be not ye called Rabbi!" and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection; it wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection, that they may with the more authority recast the world; and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture—eternally passing onward and seeking—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas

of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with the inexhaustible indulgence proper to culture, the consideration of circumstances, the severe judgment of actions joined to the merciful judgment of persons. "The man of culture is in politics," cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, "one of the poorest mortals alive!" Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a "turn for small fault-finding, love of selfish ease, and indecision in action." Of what use is culture, he asks, except for "a critic of new books or a professor of *belles-lettres?*" Why, it is of use because, in presence of the fierce exasperation which breathes, or rather, I may say, hisses, through the whole production in which Mr. Frederic Harrison asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use, because, like religion—that other effort after perfection,—it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness and light, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one even yet greater!—the passion for making them *prevail.* It is not satisfied till we *all* come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the marking epochs of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a *national* glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelli-

gent and alive. Only it must be *real* thought and *real* beauty; *real* sweetness and *real* light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organizations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgments and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been taught and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely,—nourished, and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea;* and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The

great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have labored to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanize it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was Abelard in the Middle Ages, in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were Lessing and Herder in Germany, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. And why? Because they *humanized* knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked

powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With St. Augustine they said: "Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth laborers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new laborers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."

JOHN MORLEY.

BORN 1838.

ON POPULAR CULTURE.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED AT THE TOWN HALL, BIRMINGHAM (OCTOBER 5, 1876), BY THE WRITER, AS PRESIDENT OF THE MIDLAND INSTITUTE.

BY JOHN MORLEY.

THE proceedings which have now been brought satisfactorily to an end, are of a kind which nobody who has sensibility as well as sense can take a part in without some emotion. An illustrious French philosopher, who happened to be an examiner of candidates for admission to the Polytechnic School, once confessed that, when a youth came before him eager to do his best, competently taught, and of an apt intelligence, he needed all his self-control to press back the tears from his eyes. Well, when we think how much industry, patience, and intelligent discipline; how many hard hours of self-denying toil; how many temptations to worthless pleasures resisted; how much steadfast feeling for things that are

honest and true and of good report—are all represented by the young men and young women to whom I have had the honor of giving your prizes to-night, we must all feel our hearts warmed and gladdened in generous sympathy with so much excellence, so many good hopes, and so honorable a display of those qualities which make life better worth having for ourselves, and are so likely to make the world better worth living in for those who are to come after us.

If a prize-giving is always an occasion of lively satisfaction, my own satisfaction is all the greater at this moment, because your Institute, which is doing such good work in the world, and is in every respect so prosperous and so flourishing, is the creation of the people of your own district, without subsidy and without direction either from London, or from Oxford, or from Cambridge, or from any other centre whatever. Nobody in this town at any rate needs any argument of mine to persuade him that we can only be sure of advancing all kinds of knowledge, and developing our national life in all its plenitude and variety, on condition of multiplying these local centres both of secondary and higher education, and

encouraging each of them to fight its own battle and do its work in its own way. For my own part I look with the utmost dismay at the concentration, not only of population, but of the treasures of instruction, in our vast city on the banks of the Thames. At Birmingham, as I am informed, one has not far to look for an example of this. One of the branches of your multifarious trades in this town is the manufacture of jewellery. Some of it is said commonly to be wanting in taste, elegance, skill; though some of it also—if I am not misinformed—is good enough to be passed off at Rome and at Paris, even to connoisseurs, as of Roman or French production. Now the nation possesses a most superb collection of all that is excellent and beautiful in jewellers' work. When I say that the nation possesses it, I mean that London possesses it. The University of Oxford, by the way, has also purchased a portion, but that is not at present accessible. If one of your craftsmen in that kind wants to profit by these admirable models, he must go to London. What happens is that he goes to the capital and stays there. Its superficial attractions are too strong for him. You lose a clever workman and a citizen, and

he adds one more atom to that huge, overgrown, and unwieldy community. Now, why, in the name of common-sense, should not a portion of the Castellani collection pass six months of the year in Birmingham, the very place of all others where it is most likely to be of real service, and to make an effective mark on the national taste?[1]

[1] Sir Henry Cole, C.B., writes to the *Times* (Oct. 13th) on this suggestion as follows :—"In justice to the Lords President of the Council on Education, I hope you will allow me the opportunity of stating that from 1855 the Science and Art Department has done its very utmost to induce schools of art to receive deposits of works of art for study and popular examination, and to circulate its choicest objects useful to manufacturing industry. In corroboration of this assertion, please to turn to p. 435 of the Twenty-second Report of the Department, just issued. You will there find that upward of 26,907 objects of art, besides 23,911 paintings and drawings, have been circulated since 1855, and in some cases have been left for several months for exhibition in the localities. They have been seen by more than 6,000,000 of visitors, besides having been copied by students, etc., and the localities have taken the great sum of £116,182 for showing them.

"The Department besides has tried every efficient means to induce other public institutions, which are absolutely choked with superfluous specimens, to concur in a general principle of circulating the nation's works of art, but without success.

"The chief of our national storehouses of works of art, actually repudiates the idea that its objects are collected for purposes of education, and declares that they are only 'things

To pass on to the more general remarks which you are accustomed to expect from the President of the Institute on this occasion. When I consulted one of your townsmen as to the subject which he thought would be most useful and most interesting to you, he said: "Pray talk about any thing you please, if it is only not Education." There is a saying that there are two kinds of foolish people in the world, those who give advice and those who do not take it. My friend and I in this matter represent these two interesting divisions of the race, for in spite of what he said, it is upon Education after all that I propose to offer you some short observations. You will believe it no affectation on my part, when I say that I shall do so with the sincerest willingness to be corrected by those of wider practical experience in teaching. I am well aware, too, that I have very little that is new to say, but education is one of those matters on which much that has already been said, will long bear saying over and over again.

rare and curious,' the very reverse of what common-sense says they are.

"Further, the Department, to tempt schools of art to acquire objects permanently for art museums attached to them, offered a grant in aid, of 50 per cent. of the cost price of the objects."

I have been looking through the report of your classes, and two things have rather struck me, which I will mention. One of them is the very large attendance in the French classes. This appears a singularly satisfactory thing, because you could scarcely do a hard-working man of whatever class a greater service than to give him easy access to French literature. Montesquieu used to say that he had never known a pain or a distress which he could not soothe by half an hour of a good book; and perhaps it is no more of an exaggeration to say that a man who can read French with comfort need never have a dull hour. Our own literature has assuredly many a kingly name. In boundless riches and infinite imaginative variety, there is no rival to Shakespeare in the world; in energy and height and majesty Milton and Burke have no masters. But besides its great men of this loftier sort France has a long list of authors who have produced a literature whose chief mark is its agreeableness. As has been so often said, the genius of the French language is its clearness, firmness, and order; to this clearness certain circumstances in the history of French society have added the delightful qualities of liveliness in union with

urbanity. Now, as one of the most important parts of popular education is to put people in the way of amusing and refreshing themselves in a rational rather than an irrational manner, it is a great gain to have given them the key to the most amusing and refreshing set of books in the world.

And here, perhaps, I may be permitted to remark, that it seems a pity that Racine is so constantly used as a school-book, instead of some of the moderns who are nearer to ourselves in ideas and manners. Racine is a great and admirable writer; but what you want for ordinary readers who have not much time, and whose faculties of attention are already largely exhausted by the more important industry of the day, is a book which brings literature more close to actual life than such a poet as Racine does. This is exactly one of the gifts and charms of modern French. To put what I mean very shortly, I would say, by way of illustration, that a man who could read the essays of Ste. Beuve with moderate comfort would have in his hands—of course I am now speaking of the active and busy part of the world, not of bookmen and students,—would, I say, have in his hands one of the very best

instruments that I can think of; such work is exquisite and instructive in itself, it is a model of gracious writing, it is full of ideas, it breathes the happiest moods over us, and it is the most suggestive of guides, for those who have the capacity of extensive interests, to all the greater spheres of thought and history.

This word brings me back to the second fact that has struck me in your report, and it is this. The subject of English history has apparently so little popularity, that the class is as near being a failure as any thing connected with the Midland Institute can be. On the whole, whatever may be the ability and the zeal of the teacher, this is, in my humble judgment, neither very surprising nor particularly mortifying, if we think what history in the established conception of it means. How are we to expect workmen to make their way through constitutional antiquities, through the labyrinthine shifts of party intrigue at home, and through the entanglements of intricate diplomacy abroad—"shallow village tales," as Emerson calls them? These studies are fit enough for professed students of the special subject, but such exploration is for the ordinary run of men and women impossible, and I do not

know that it would lead them into very fruitful lands even if it were easy. You know what the great Duke of Marlborough said: that he had learned all the history he ever knew out of Shakespeare's historical plays. I have long thought that if we persuaded those classes who have to fight their own little Battles of Blenheim for bread every day, to make such a beginning of history as is furnished by Shakespeare's plays and Scott's novels, we should have done more to imbue them with a real interest in the past of mankind, than if we had taken them through a course of Hume and Smollett, or Hallam on the English Constitution, or even the dazzling Macaulay. What I for one should like to see in such an institution as this, would be an attempt to compress the whole history of England into a dozen or fifteen lectures—lectures of course accompanied by catechetical instruction. I am not so extravagant as to dream that a short general course of this kind would be enough to go over so many of the details as it is desirable for men to know, but details in popular instruction, though not in study of the writer or the university professor, are only important after you have imparted the largest general truths.

It is the general truths that stir a life-like curiosity as to the particulars which they are the means of lighting up. Now this short course would be quite enough to present in a bold outline—and it need not be a whit the less true and real for being both bold and rapid—the great chains of events and the decisive movements, that have made of ourselves and our institutions what we and what they are—the Teutonic beginnings, the Conquest, the Great Charter, the Hundred Years' War, the Reformation, the Civil Wars and the Revolution, the Emancipation of the American Colonies from the Monarchy. If this course were framed and filled in with a true social intelligence, men would find that they had at the end of it a fair idea—an idea that might be of great value, and at any rate an idea much to be preferred to that blank ignorance which is in so many cases practically the only alternative—of the large issues of our past, of the antagonistic principles that strove with one another for mastery, of the chief material forces and moral currents of successive ages, and, above all, of those great men and our fathers that begat us—the Pyms, the Hampdens, the Cromwells, the Chathams—yes, and

shall we not say the Washingtons,—to whose sagacity, bravery, and unquenchable ardor for justice and order and equal laws all our English-speaking peoples owe a debt that can never be paid.

Another point is worth thinking of, besides the reduction of history for your purposes to a comprehensive body of rightly grouped generalities. Dr. Arnold says somewhere, that he wishes the public might have a history of our present state of society *traced backward*. It is the present that really interests us; it is the present that we seek to understand and to explain. I do not in the least want to know what happened in the past, except as it enables me to see my way more clearly through what is happening to-day. I want to know what men thought and did in the thirteenth century, not out of any dilettante or idle antiquarian's curiosity, but because the thirteenth century is at the root of what men think and do in the nineteenth. Well, then, it cannot be a bad educational rule to start from what is most interesting, and to work from that outward and backward. By beginning with the present, we see more clearly what are the two things best worth attending to in history—not

party intrigues nor battles nor dynastic affairs, nor even many acts of Parliament, but the great movements of the economic forces of a society on the one hand, and on the other the forms of religious opinion and ecclesiastical organization. All the rest are important, but their importance is subsidiary.

Allow me to make one more remark on this subject. If a dozen or a score of wise lectures would suffice for a general picture of the various phases through which our own society has passed, there ought to be added to the course of popular instruction as many lectures more, which should trace the history, not of England, but of the world. And the history of the world ought to go before the history of England. This is no paradox, but the deliberate opinion of many of those who have thought most deeply about the far-reaching chain of human progress. When I was on a visit to the United States some years ago—things may have improved since then—I could not help noticing that the history classes in their common-schools all began their work with the year 1776, when the American colonies formed themselves into an independent confederacy. The teaching assumed that the creation of the

universe occurred about that date. What could be more absurd, more narrow and narrowing, more mischievously misleading as to the whole purport and significance of history? As if the laws, the representative institutions, the religious uses, the scientific methods, the moral ideas, which give to an American citizen his character and mental habits and social surroundings, had not all their roots in the deeds and thoughts of wise and brave men, who lived in centuries which are of course just as much the inheritance of the vast continent of the West, as they are of the little island whence its first colonizers sailed forth.

Well, there is something nearly as absurd, if not quite, in our common plan of taking for granted that people should begin their reading of history, not in 1776, but in 1066. As if this could bring into our minds what is after all the greatest lesson of history, namely, the fact of its oneness; of the independence of all the elements that have in the course of long ages made the European of to-day what we see him to be. It is no doubt necessary for clear and definite comprehension to isolate your phenomenon, and to follow the stream of our own history separately. But that cannot be

enough. We must also see that this stream is the effluent of a far broader and mightier flood—whose springs and sources and great tributaries lay higher up in the history of mankind.

"We are learning," says Mr. Freeman, whose little book on the "Unity of History" I cannot be wrong in warmly recommending even to the busiest among you, "that European history, from its first glimmerings to our own day, is one unbroken drama, no part of which can be rightly understood without reference to the other parts which come before and after it. We are learning that of this great drama Rome is the centre, the point to which all roads lead and from which all roads lead no less. The world of independent Greece stands on one side of it; the world of modern Europe stands on another. But the history alike of the great centre itself, and of its satellites on either side, can never be fully grasped except from a point of view wide enough to take in the whole group, and to mark the relations of each of its members to the centre and to one another."

Now the counsel which our learned historian thus urges upon the scholar and the leisured

student, equally represents the point of view which is proper for the more numerous classes of whom we are thinking to-night. The scale will have to be reduced; all save the very broadest aspects of things will have to be left out; none save the highest ranges and the streams of most copious volume will find a place in that map. Small as is the scale and many as are its omissions, yet if a man has intelligently followed the very shortest course of universal history, it will be the fault of his teacher if he has not acquired an impressive conception, which will never be effaced, of the destinies of man upon the earth; of the mighty confluence of forces working on from age to age, which have their meeting in every one of us here to-night; of the order in which each state of society has followed its foregoer, according to great and changeless laws "embracing all things and all times"; of the thousand faithful hands that have, one after another, each in their several degrees, orders, and capacities, trimmed the silver lamp of knowledge and kept its sacred flame bright from generation to generation and age to age, now in one land and now in another, from its early spark among far-off dim Chaldeans down to Goethe and Fara-

day and Darwin and all the other good workers of our own day.

The shortest course of universal history will let him see how he owes to the Greek civilization, on the shores of the Mediterranean two thousand years back, a debt extending from the architectural forms of this very Town Hall to some of the most systematic operations of his own mind; will let him see the forum of Rome, its roads and its gates—

> "What conflux issuing forth or entering in,
> Prætors, Proconsuls to their provinces
> Hasting or on return, in robes of state,—"

all busily welding an empire together in a marvellous framework of citizenship, manners, and laws, that laid assured foundations for a still higher civilization that was to come after. He will learn how when the Roman Empire declined, then at Damascus and Bagdad and Seville the Mahometan conquerors took up the torch of science and learning, and handed it on to Western Europe when the new generations were ready. He will learn how in the meantime, during ages which we both wrongly and ungratefully call dark, from Rome again, that other great organization, the mediæval Church, had arisen, which amid many imper-

fections and some crimes did a work that no glory of physical science can equal, and no instrument of physical science can compass, in purifying men's appetites, in setting discipline and direction on their lives, and in offering to humanity new types of moral obligation and fairer ideals of saintly perfection, whose light still shines like a star to guide our own poor voyages. It is only by this contemplation of the life of our race as a whole that men see the beginnings and the ends of things; learn not to be near-sighted in history, but to look before and after; see their own part and lot in the rising up and going down of empires and faiths since first recorded time began; and what I am contending for is that even if you can take your young men and women no further than the mere vestibule of this ancient and ever venerable temple of many marvels, you will have opened to them the way to a kind of knowledge that not only enlightens the understanding, but enriches the character —which is a higher thing than mere intellect— and makes it constantly alive with the spirit of beneficence.

I know it is said that such a view of collective history is true, but that you will never get

plain people to respond to it; it is a thing for intellectual *dilettanti* and moralizing *virtuosi.* Well, we do not know, because we have never yet honestly tried, what the commonest people will or will not respond to. When Sir Richard Wallace's pictures were being exhibited at Bethnal Green, after people had said that the workers had no souls for art and would not appreciate its treasures, a story is told of a female in very poor clothes gazing intently at a picture of the Infant Jesus in the arms of his Mother, and then exclaiming, "*Who would not try to be a good woman, who had such a child as that?*" We have never yet, I say, tried the height and pitch to which our people are capable of rising.

I have thought it well to take this opportunity of saying a word for history, because I cannot help thinking that one of the most narrow, and what will eventually be one of the most impoverishing, characteristics of our day is the execssive supremacy claimed for physical science. This is partly due, no doubt, to a most wholesome reaction against the excessive supremacy that has hitherto been claimed for literature, and held by literature, in our schools and universities. At the same time, it is well to remember that the historic sciences are

making strides not unworthy of being compared with those of the physical sciences, and not only is there room for both, but any system is radically wrong which excludes or depresses either to the advantage of the other.[1]

And now there is another idea which I should like to throw out, if you will not think it too tedious and too special. It is an old saying that, after all, the great end and aim of the British Constitution is to get twelve honest men into a box. That is really a very sensible way of putting the theory, that the first end of government is to give security to life and property, and to make people keep their contracts. But with this view it is not only important that you should get twelve honest men into a box: the twelve honest men must have in their heads some notions as to what constitutes evidence. Now it is surely a striking

[1] A very eminent physicist writes to me on this passage: "I cannot help smiling when I think of the place of physical science in the endowed schools," etc. My reference was to the great prevalence of such assertions as that human progress depends upon increase of our knowledge of the conditions of material phenomena (Dr. Draper, for instance, lays this down as a fundamental axiom of history): as if moral advance, the progressive elevation of types of character and ethical ideals, were not at least an equally important cause of improvement in civilization. The type of Saint Vincent de Paul is plainly as indispensable to progress as the type of Newton.

thing that while we are so careful to teach physical science and literature; while men want to be endowed in order to have leisure to explore our spinal cords, and to observe the locomotor system of Medusæ,—and I have no objection against those who urge on all these studies,—yet there is no systematic teaching, very often no teaching at all, in the principles of evidence and reasoning, even for the bulk of those who would be very much offended if we were to say that they are not educated. Of course I use the term evidence in a wider sense than the testimony in crimes and contracts, and the other business of courts of law. Questions of evidence are rising at every hour of the day. As Bentham says, it is a question of evidence with the cook whether the joint of meat is roasted enough. It has been excellently said that the principal and most characteristic difference between one human intellect and another consists in their ability to judge correctly of evidence. Most of us, Mr. Mill says, are very unsafe hands at estimating evidence, if appeal cannot be made to actual eyesight. Indeed, if we think of some of the tales that have been lately diverting the British Association, we might perhaps go further, and describe many

of us as very bad hands at estimating evidence, even where appeal can be made to actual eyesight. Eyesight, in fact, is the least part of the matter. The senses are as often the tools as the guides of reason. One of the longest chapters in the history of vulgar error would contain the cases in which the eyes have only seen what old prepossessions inspired them to see, and were blind to all that would have been fatal to the prepossessions. "It is beyond all question or dispute," says Voltaire, "that magic words and ceremonies are quite capable of most effectually destroying a whole flock of sheep, if the words be accompanied by a sufficient quantity of arsenic." Sorcery has no doubt been exploded—at least we assume that it has—but the temper that made men attribute all the efficacy to the magic words, and entirely overlook the arsenic, still prevails in a great host of moral and political affairs, into which it is not convenient to enter here. The stability of a government for instance is constantly set down to some ornamental part of it, when in fact the ornamental part has no more to do with stability than the incantations of the soothsayer.

You have heard, again, that for many gener-

ations the people of the Isle of St. Kilda believed that the arrival of a ship in the harbor inflicted on the islanders epidemic colds in the head, and many ingenious reasons were from time to time devised by clever men why the ship should cause colds among the population. At last it occurred to somebody that the ship might not be the cause of the colds, but that both might be the common effects of some other cause, and it was then remembered that a ship could only enter the harbor when there was a strong northeast wind blowing.

However faithful the observation, as soon as ever a man uses words he may begin at that moment to go wrong. "A village apothecary," it has been said, "and if possible in a still greater degree, an experienced nurse, is seldom able to describe the plainest case without employing a phraseology of which every word is a theory; the simplest narrative of the most illiterate observer involves more or less of hypothesis";—yet both by the observer himself and by most of those who listen to him, each of these conjectural assumptions is treated as respectfully as if it were an established axiom. We are supposed to deny the possibility of a

circumstance, when in truth we only deny the evidence alleged for it. We allow the excellence of reasoning from certain data to captivate our belief in the truth of the data themselves, even when they are unproved and unprovable. There is no end, in short, of the ways in which men habitually go wrong in their reasoning, tacit or expressed. The greatest boon that any benefactor could confer on the human race would be to teach men—and especially women—to quantify their propositions. It sometimes seems as if Swift were right when he said that mankind were just as fit for flying as for thinking.

Now it is quite true that mother-wit and the common experiences of life do often furnish people with a sort of shrewd and sound judgment that carries them very creditably through the world. They come to good conclusions, though perhaps they would give bad reasons for them if they were forced to find their reasons. But you cannot count upon mother-wit in everybody; perhaps not even in a majority. And then as for the experience of life,—there are a great many questions, and those of the deepest ultimate importance to mankind, in which the ordinary experience of life sheds

no light, until it has been interrogated and interpreted by men with trained minds. "It is far easier," as has been said, "to acquire facts than to judge what they prove." What is done in our systems of training to teach people how to judge what facts prove? There is mathematics, no doubt; anybody who has done even no more than the first book of Euclid's geometry, ought to have got into his head the notion of a demonstration, of the rigorously close connection between a conclusion and its premises, of the necessity of being able to show how each link in the chain comes to be where it is, and that it has a right to be there. This, however, is a long way from the facts of real life, and a man might well be a great geometer, and still be a thoroughly bad reasoner in practical questions.

Again, in other of your classes, in chemistry, in astronomy, in natural history, besides acquiring groups of facts, the student has a glimpse of the method by which they were discovered, of the type of inference to which the discovery conforms, so that the discovery of a new comet, the detection of a new species, the invention of a new chemical compound, —each becomes a lesson of the most beautiful

and impressive kind in the art of reasoning. And it would be superfluous and impertinent for me here to point out how valuable such lessons are in the way of mental discipline, apart from the fruit they bear in other ways. But here again the relation to the judgments we have to form in the moral, political, practical sphere is too remote and too indirect. The judgments, in this region, of the most brilliant and successful explorers in physical science, seem to be exactly as liable to every kind of fallacy as those of other people. The application of scientific method and conception to society is yet in its infancy, and the "Novum Organum" or the "Principia" of moral and social phenomena will perhaps not be wholly disclosed to any of us now alive. In any case it is clear that for the purposes of such an institution as this, if the rules of evidence and proof and all the other safeguards for making your propositions true and relevant, are to be taught at all, they must be taught not only in an elementary form, but with illustrations that shall convey their own direct reference and application to practical life. If everybody could find time to master Mill's "Logic" or so instructive and interesting a book as Professor Jevons'

"Principles of Science," a certain number at any rate of the bad mental habits of people would be cured ; and for those of you here who have leisure enough, and want to find a worthy keystone of your culture, it would be hard to find a better thing to do for the next six months than to work through one or both of the books I have just named—pen in hand. The ordinary text-books of formal logic do not seem to meet the special aim which I am now trying to impress as desirable—namely, the habit of valuing, not merely speculative or scientific truth, but the truth of practical life ; a practising of the intellect in forming and expressing the opinions and judgments that form the staple of our daily discourse.

It is now accepted that the most effective way of learning a foreign language is to begin by reading books written in it, or by conversing in it—and then after a certain empirical familiarity with vocabulary and construction has been acquired, one may proceed to master the grammar. Just in the same way it would seem to be the best plan to approach the art of practical reasoning in concrete examples, in cases of actual occurrence and living interest ; and then after the processes of disentangling a

complex group of propositions, of dividing and sifting, of scenting a fallacy, have all become familiar, it may be worth while to find names for them all, and to set out rules for reasoning rightly, just as in the former illustration the rules of writing correctly follow a certain practice, rather than precede it.

Now it has long seemed to me that the best way of teaching carefulness and precision in dealing with propositions might be found through the medium of the argumentation in the courts of justice. This is reasoning in real matter. There is a famous book well known to legal students—Smith's "Leading Cases"—which contains a selection of important decisions, and sets forth the grounds on which the courts arrived at them. I have often thought that a dozen or a score of cases might be collected from this book into a small volume, that would make such a manual as no other matter could, for opening plain men's eyes to the logical pitfalls among which they go stumbling and crashing, when they think they are disputing like Socrates or reasoning like Newton. They would see how a proposition or an expression that looks straightforward and unmistakable, is yet on examination found to be capable of

bearing several distinct interpretations and meaning several distinct things; how the same evidence may warrant different conclusions, and what kinds of evidence carry with them what degrees of validity; how certain sorts of facts can only be proved in one way, and certain other sorts of facts in some other way; how necessary it is, before you set out, to know exactly what it is you intend to show, or what it is you intend to dispute; how there may be many argumentative objections to a proposition, yet the balance be in favor of its adoption. It is from the generality of people having neglected to practise the attention on these and the like matters, that interest and prejudice find so ready an instrument of sophistry in that very art of speech which ought to be the organ of reason and truth. To bring the matter to a point, then, I submit that it might be worth while in this and all such institutions to have a class for the study of logic, reasoning, evidence, and that such a class might well find its best material in selections from "Leading Cases," and from Bentham's "Rationale of Judicial Evidence," elucidated by those special sections in Mill's "Logic," or smaller manuals such as those of Mr. Fowler, the Oxford Professor

of Logic, which treat of the department of fallacies. Perhaps Bentham's "Book of Fallacies" is too political for me to commend it to you here. But if there happens to be any one in Birmingham who is fond of meeting proposed changes by saying that they are Utopian; that they are good in theory, but bad in practice; that they are too good to be realized, and so forth, then I can promise him that he will in that book hear of something very much to his advantage.[1]

An incidental advantage—which is worth mentioning—of making legal instances the medium of instruction in practical logic, would be that people would—not learn law, of course, in the present state of our system, but they would have their attention called in a direct and business-like way to the lawyer's point of

[1] This suggestion has fortunately found favor in a quarter where shrewd and critical common-sense is never wanting. The *Economist* (Oct. 14th) writes:—"Such a text-book commented on to a class by a man trained to estimate the value of evidence, would form a most valuable study, and not, we should imagine, at all less fascinating than valuable. Of course the class suggested would not be a class in English law, but in the principles on which evidence should be estimated, and the special errors to which, in common life, average minds are most liable. We regard this suggestion as a most useful one, and as one which would not only greatly contribute to the educational worth of an institute for adults, but also to its popularity."

view, and those features of procedure in which every man and woman in the land has so immediate an interest. Perhaps if people interested themselves more seriously than is implied by reading famous cases in the newspapers, we should get rid, for one thing, of the rule which makes the accused person in a criminal case incompetent to testify; and, for another, of that infamous license of cross-examination to credit, which is not only barbarous to those who have to submit to it, but leads to constant miscarriage of justice in the case of those who, rather than submit to it, will suffer wrong.

It will be said, I dare say, that overmuch scruple about our propositions and the evidence for them will reduce men, especially the young, to the intellectual condition of the great philosopher, Marphurius, in Molière's comedy. Marphurius rebukes Saganarelle for saying he had come into the room: "What you should say is, that it *seems* I am come into the room." Instead of the downright affirmation and burly negations so becoming to Britons, he would bring down all our propositions to the attenuation of a possibility or a perhaps. We need not fear such an end. The exigencies of practical

affairs will not allow this endless balancing. They are always driving men to the other extreme, making us like the new judge, who first heard the counsel on one side and made up his mind on the merits of the case, until the turn of the opposing counsel came, and then the new counsel filled the judge with so many doubts and perplexities, that he suddenly vowed that nothing would induce him to pay any heed to evidence again as long as he lived.

I do not doubt that I shall be blamed in what I have said about French, and about history, for encouraging a spirit of superficiality, and of contentment with worthless smatterings of things. To this I should answer that, as Archbishop Whately pointed out long ago, it is a fallacy to mistake general truths for superficial truths, or a knowledge of the leading propositions of a subject for a superficial knowledge. "To have a general knowledge of a subject is to know only its leading truths, but to know these thoroughly, so as to have a true conception of the subject in its great features." (*Mill.*) And I need not point out that instruction may be of the most general kind, and still possess that most important

quality of all instruction—namely, being *methodical.*

I think popular instruction has been made much more repulsive than it need have been, and more repulsive than it ought to have been, because those who have had the control of the movement for the last fifty years, have been too anxious to make the type of popular instruction conform to the type of academic instruction proper to learned men. The principles of instruction have been too rigorously ascetic and puritanical, and instead of making the access to knowledge as easy as possible, we have delighted in forcing every pilgrim to make his journey to the shrine of the Muses with a hair shirt on his back and peas in his shoes. Nobody would say that Macaulay had a superficial knowledge of the things best worth knowing in ancient literature, yet we have his own confession that when he became a busy man—as you are all busy—then he read his classics, not like a collegian, but like a man of the world; if he did not know a word he passed it over, and if a passage refused to give up its meaning at the second reading, then he let it alone. Now the aims of academic education and those of popular education are—it is obvious if you come to

think of it—quite different. The end of the one is rather to increase knowledge; of the other to diffuse it, and to increase men's interest in what is already known. If, therefore, I am for making certain kinds of instruction as general as they can possibly be made in these local centres, I should give to the old seats of learning a very special function indeed.

It would be absurd to attempt to discuss academic organization here at this hour. I only want to ask you as politicians whose representatives in Parliament will ultimately settle the matter—to reflect whether the money now consumed in idle fellowships might not be more profitably employed in endowing enquirers. The favorite argument of those who support prize fellowships is that they are the only means by which a child of the working-class can raise himself to the highest position in the land. My answer to this would be that, in the first place, it is of questionable expediency to invite the cleverest members of any class to leave it—instead of making their abilities available in it, and so raising the whole class along with, and by means of, their own rise. Second, these prize fellowships will continue, and must continue, to be carried off by

those who can afford time and money to educate their sons for the competition. Third, I doubt the expediency—and the history of Oxford within the last twenty-five years strikingly confirms this doubt—of giving to a young man of any class what is practically a premium on indolence, and the removal of a motive to self-reliant and energetic spirit of enterprise. The best thing that I can think of as happening to a young man is this: that he should have been educated at a day-school in his own town; that he should have opportunities of following also the higher education in his own town; and that at the earliest convenient time he should be taught to earn his own living.

The universities might then be left to their proper business of study. Knowledge for its own sake is clearly an object which only a very small portion of society can be spared to pursue; only a very few men in a generation have that devouring passion for knowing, which is the true inspirer of fruitful study and exploration. Even if the passion were more common than it is, the world could not afford on any very large scale that men should indulge in it: the great business of the world has to be carried on. One of the greatest of all hindrances

to making things better, is the habit of taking for granted that plans or ideas, simply because they are different and approach the matter from different sides, are therefore the rivals and enemies, instead of being the friends and complements of one another. But a great and wealthy society like ours ought very well to be able to nourish one or two great seats for the augmentation of true learning, and at the same time make sure that young men—and again I say, especially young women—should have a good education of the higher kind within reach of their own hearths.

It is not necessary for me here, I believe, to dwell upon any of the great commonplaces which the follower of knowledge does well to keep always before his eyes, and which represent the wisdom of many generations of studious experience. You may have often heard from others, or may have found out, how good it is to have on your shelves, however scantily furnished they may be, three or four of those books, to which it is well to give ten minutes every morning, before going down into the battle and choking dust of the day. Men will name these books for themselves. One will choose the Bible, another Goethe, one the

"Imitation of Christ," another Wordsworth. Perhaps it matters little what it be, so long as your writer has cheerful seriousness, elevation, calm, and, above all, a sense of size and strength, which shall open out the day before you and bestow gifts of fortitude and mastery.

Then, to turn to the intellectual side. You know as well as I or any one can tell you, that knowledge is worth little until you have made it so perfectly your own, as to be capable of reproducing it in precise and definite form. Goethe said that in the end we only retain of our studies, after all, what we practically employ of them. And it is at least well that in our serious studies we should have the possibility of practically turning them to a definite destination, clearly before our eyes. Nobody can be sure that he has got clear ideas on a subject, unless he has tried to put them down on a piece of paper in independent words of his own. It is an excellent plan, too, when you have read a good book, to sit down and write a short abstract of what you can remember of it. It is a still better plan, if you can make up your minds to a slight extra labor, to do what Lord Strafford, and Gibbon, and Daniel Webster did. After glancing over the

title, subject, or design of a book, these eminent men would take a pen and write roughly what questions they expected to find answered in it, what difficulties solved, what kind of information imparted. Such practices keep us from reading with the eye only, gliding vaguely over the page; and they help us to *place* our new acquisitions in relation with what we knew before. It is almost always worth while to read a thing twice over, to make sure that nothing has been missed or dropped on the way, or wrongly conceived or interpreted. And if the subject be serious, it is often well to let an interval elapse. Ideas, relations, statements of fact, are not to be taken by storm. We have to steep them in the mind, in the hope of thus extracting their inmost essence and significance. If one lets an interval pass, and then returns, it is surprising how clear and ripe that has become, which, when we left it, seemed crude, obscure, full of perplexity.

All this takes trouble, no doubt, but then it will not do to deal with ideas that we find in books or elsewhere as a certain bird does with its eggs—leave them in the sand for the sun to hatch and chance to rear. People who fol-

low this plan possess nothing better than ideas half-hatched, and convictions reared by accident. They are like a man who should pace up and down the world in the delusion that he is clad in sumptuous robes of purple and velvet, when in truth he is only half-covered by the rags and tatters of other people's cast-off clothes.

Apart from such mechanical devices as these I have mentioned, there are habits and customary attitudes of mind which a conscientious reader will practise, if he desires to get out of a book still greater benefits than the writer of it may have designed or thought of. For example, he should never be content with mere aggressive and negatory criticism of the page before him. The page may be open to such criticism, and in that case it is natural to indulge in it; but the reader will often find an unexpected profit by asking himself—What does this error teach me? How comes that fallacy to be here? How came the writer to fall into this defect of taste? To ask such questions gives a reader a far healthier tone of mind in the long run, more seriousness, more depth, more moderation of judgment, more insight into other men's ways of thinking as

well as into his own, than any amount of impatient condemnation and hasty denial, even when both condemnation and denial may be in their place.

Again, let us not be too ready to detect an inconsistency in our author, but rather let us teach ourselves to distinguish between inconsistency and having two sides to an opinion. "Before I admit that two and two are four," some one said, "I must first know to what use you are going to put the proposition." That is to say, even the plainest proposition needs to be stated with a view to the drift of the discussion in hand, or with a view to some special part of the discussion. When the turn of some other part of the matter comes, it will be convenient and often necessary to bring out into full light another side of your opinion, not contradictory, but complementary, and the great distinction of a candid disputant or of a reader of good faith, is his willingness to take pains to see the points of reconciliation among different aspects and different expressions of what is substantially the same judgment.

Then, again, nobody here needs to be reminded that the great successes of the world have been affairs of a second, a third, nay, a

fiftieth trial. The history of literature, of science, of art, of industrial achievements,—all testify to the truth that success is only the last term of what looked like a series of failures. What is true of the great achievements of history, is true also of the little achievements of the observant cultivator of his own understanding. If a man is despondent about his work, the best remedy that I can prescribe to him is to turn to a good biography; there he will find that other men before him have known the dreary reaction that follows long-sustained effort, and he will find that one of the differences between the first-rate man and the fifth-rate lies in the vigor with which the first-rate man recovers from this reaction, and crushes it down, and again flings himself once more upon the breach. I remember the wisest and most virtuous man I have ever known, or am ever likely to know,—Mr. Mill,—once saying to me that whenever he had written any thing, he always felt profoundly dissatisfied with it, and it was only by reflecting that he had felt the same about other pieces of which the world had thought well, that he could bring himself to send the new production to the printer. The heroism of the scholar and the truth-seeker

is not less admirable than the heroism of the man-at-arms.

Finally, you none of you need to be reminded of the most central and important of all the commonplaces of the student—that the stuff of which life is made is Time; that it is better, as Goethe said, to do the most trifling thing in the world, than to think half an hour a trifling thing. Nobody means by this that we are to have no pleasures. Where time is lost and wasted is where many people lose and waste their money—in things that are neither pleasure nor business—in those random and officious sociabilities, which neither refresh nor instruct nor invigorate, but only fret and benumb and wear all edge off the mind. All these things, however, you have all of you often thought about; yet, alas, we are so ready to forget, both in these matters and in other and weightier, how irrevocable are our mistakes.

> "The moving Finger writes, and having writ,
> Moves on; nor all your piety nor wit
> Can lure it back to cancel half a line,
> Nor all your tears wipe out a word of it."

And now I think I cannot ask you to listen any longer. I will only add that these ceremonial anniversaries, when they are over, some-

times slightly tend to depress us, unless we are on our guard. When the prizes of the year are all distributed, and the address is at an end, we perhaps ask ourselves, Well, and what then? It is not to be denied that the expectations of the first fervent promoters of popular instruction by such institutes as this—of men like Lord Brougham and others, a generation ago —were not fulfilled. The principal reason was that the elementary instruction of the country was not then sufficiently advanced to supply a population ready to take advantage of education in the higher subjects. Well, we are in a fair way for removing that obstacle. It is true that the old world moves tardily on its arduous way, but even if the results of all our efforts in the cause of education were smaller than they are, there are still two considerations that ought to weigh with us and encourage us.

For one thing, you never know what child in rags and pitiful squalor that meets you in the street may have in him the germ of gifts that might add new treasures to the store-house of beautiful things or noble acts. In that great storm of terror that swept over France in 1793, a certain man who was every hour expecting

to be led off to the guillotine, uttered this memorable sentiment: "Even at this incomprehensible moment," he said "when mortality, enlightenment, love of country,—all of them only make death at the prison-door or on the scaffold more certain—yes, on the fatal tumbril itself, with nothing free but my voice, I could still cry *Take care*, to a child that should come too near the wheel; perhaps I may save his life, perhaps he may one day save his country." This is a generous and inspiring thought—one to which the roughest-handed man or woman in Birmingham may respond as honestly and heartily as the philosopher who wrote it. It ought to shame the listlessness with which so many of us see the great phantasmagoria of life pass before us.

There is another thought to encourage us, still more direct, and still more positive. The boisterous old notion of hero-worship, which has been preached by so eloquent a voice in our age, is, after all, now seen to be a half-truth, and to contain the less edifying and the less profitable half of the truth. The world will never be able to spare its hero, and the man with the rare and inexplicable gift of genius will always be as commanding a

figure as he has ever been. What we see every day with increasing clearness is that not only the well-being of the many, but the chances of exceptional genius, moral or intellectual, in the gifted few, are highest in a society where the *average* interest, curiosity, capacity, are all highest. The moral of this for you and for me is plain. We cannot, like Beethoven or Handel, lift the soul by the magic of divine melody into the seventh heaven of ineffable vision and hope incommensurable; we cannot, like Newton, weigh the far-off stars in a balance, and measure the heavings of the eternal flood; we cannot, like Voltaire, scorch up what is cruel and false by a word as a flame; nor, like Milton or Burke, awaken men's hearts with the note of an organ-trumpet; we cannot, like the great saints of the churches and the great sages of the schools, add to those acquisitions of spiritual beauty and intellectual mastery which have, one by one, and little by little, raised man from being no higher than the brute to be only a little lower than the angels. But what we can do—the humblest of us in this great hall—is by diligently using our own minds and diligently seeking to extend our own opportunities to others, to help to swell

that common tide, on the force and the set of whose currents depends the prosperous voyaging of humanity. When our names are blotted out, and our place knows us no more, the energy of each social service will remain, and so too, let us not forget, will each social disservice remain, like the unending stream of one of nature's forces. The thought that this is so, may well lighten the poor perplexities of our daily life, and even soothe the pang of its calamities; it lifts us from our feet as on wings, opening a larger meaning to our private toil and a higher purpose to our public endeavor; it makes the morning as we awake to its welcome, and the evening like a soft garment as it wraps us about; it nerves our arm with boldness against oppression and injustice, and strengthens our voice with deeper accents against falsehood, while we are yet in the full noon of our days—yes, and perhaps it will shed some ray of consolation, when our eyes are growing dim to it all, and we go down into the Valley of Darkness.

END.

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